

The First Book of the KINGS Commonly Called the Third Book of the Kings

INTRODUCTION

[Following is the introduction to both 1 Kings and 2 Kings, which are parts of one whole.]

1. Title. The present two books of Kings were originally one, known in Hebrew as *Melakim*, “Kings.” In the Hebrew Bible, Kings continued undivided until the time of the printed edition of Daniel Bomberg, 1516–17. The Greek translators of the LXX, who divided the “book of Samuel” into two books, also divided the “book of Kings” into two books, and treated the four as parts 1 to 4 of “Kingdoms.”

The title “Kings” indicates the contents of the books; our present first book of Kings gives the history of the Hebrew monarchs beginning with the death of David and the reign of Solomon and closing with the accession of Jehoram in Judah and Ahaziah in Israel. Second Kings begins with a continuation of the account of Ahaziah’s reign and closes with the end of the kingdom of Judah.

2. Authorship. The books of Kings are more in the nature of a compilation of selected materials brought together an editor rather than an original production from a single hand. They contain highly valuable and reliable historical material. Items drawn by inspired from early sources have been brought together and arranged into a framework following a specific pattern, with comments indicating a deep religious purpose. Many items have been taken directly or indirectly from official court or temple records. Archeological research touching many of these items has proved beyond question the striking accuracy of the accounts in Kings. There are narratives taken over, no doubt, from records preserved in the schools of the prophets. Stories are presented at times with great dramatic appeal, and yet again with sober moralizing judgments. Historical contributions are found in these writings without parallel anywhere in the records of Assyria, Egypt, or Babylon. Even when judged from the standpoint of profane history, these writings, with their deep human appeal, their matchless charm, sagacious political judgments, and penetrating moral philosophy, are among the most outstanding productions that have come to us from the ancient East.

With all the diversity of source material, there exists a striking evidence of unity and regularity of plan. The accounts of the various kings are presented with a fixed formula for the beginning and ending of each reign. Judgments are pronounced in which the kings are compared with either the good or evil monarchs who preceded them. Certain peculiarities of thought and expression which pervade the entire two books of Kings point definitely to some single individual who played a prominent part in bringing together this material in its present form.

The date of the composition is provided by the conclusion of the book itself, the final period of Judean history, when the southern kingdom was brought to its end by Nebuchadnezzar and its people were taken into Babylonian captivity. We cannot identify with certainty the individual who brought together the materials of Kings in their present form, but Jewish tradition has a report in the Talmud, *Baba Bathra*, 15a, that it was Jeremiah. If 2 Kings 25:27–30 be regarded as a postscript, the editor could well have been Jeremiah or an inspired contemporary of his.

3. Historical Setting. The books of Kings parallel one of the most interesting and eventful periods of ancient Near Eastern history. This is the period when Assyria rose to the height of its power and when its kings went out to conquer the world, including in their schemes of conquest the monarchies of Israel and Judah. This is the time of the Twenty-first to the Twenty-sixth Dynasty in Egypt, when Egypt had not yet given up its plans of conquest and when it vied with the Mesopotamia powers for the control of Palestine and Syria. This is the time of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, when the Medes and Chaldeans defeated the Assyrian Empire and brought much of the Near East under their sway, destroying the nation of Judah and taking the southern tribes into captivity to Babylon.

Throughout this period the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were in almost constant and vital contact with the nations of the East. Among the wives of Solomon was a daughter of Pharaoh. Hiram of Tyre was regarded by Solomon as a personal friend, and lent great assistance in the construction of the Temple. Jeroboam, who was destined to become the first king of Israel, was a political refugee from Solomon and sought asylum in Egypt. Rehoboam, in the fifth year of his reign, was attacked by Shishak of Egypt. This Biblical “Shishak” was the famous Sheshonk I, founder of Egypt’s Twenty-second Dynasty, who also left his own record of his attack on the cities of Israel and Judah. Omri was a king who left such an imprint upon posterity that the kingdom of Israel came to be known among the Assyrians as *Mat Humri*, “Omri-Land.” Shalmaneser III mentions Ahab as having fought with the western allies against Assyria at the battle of Qarqar in Shalmaneser’s sixth year and that in his eighteenth year he received tribute from Jehu.

Mesha of Moab is reported as having paid tribute to Ahab and as having rebelled against Israel after Ahab’s death. Further interesting details of this incident come to us from the famous Moabite Stone—that he received tribute from King “Joash, the Samaritan.” The record in Kings mentions Menahem’s payment of tribute to Pul of Assyria and of Tiglath-pileser’s attack on the northern tribes during the reign of Pekah. We also possess the records of Tiglath-pileser III in which he mentions his contacts with Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea of Israel, and with Azariah and Ahaz of Judah.

The Bible also mentions the payment of tribute by Hoshea to Shalmaneser V, Hoshea’s subsequent conspiracy against Assyria and with So of Egypt, and Shalmaneser’s three-year siege of Samaria, ending in the capture of Samaria and the end of the northern kingdom (2 Kings 17).

During the 14th year of Hezekiah, Sennacherib made his famous invasion of Palestine, with “all the fenced cities of Judah” falling into his hands and with Hezekiah himself besieged at Jerusalem. Sennacherib has left to posterity his own vivid account of this campaign. It was about the time of Hezekiah’s heroic resistance against Sennacherib that Merodach-baladan of Babylon (see on 2 Kings 20:12) sent his envoys to the Judean king.

Josiah met his death at the hands of Necho of Egypt while endeavoring to resist an Egyptian thrust through Palestine. Finally there are detailed accounts of Nebuchadnezzar’s numerous campaigns against Jerusalem in the days of Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah, which resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the southern kingdom.

To appreciate this important period of Hebrew history it is necessary to understand the events then taking place in Assyria, Egypt, and Babylon. To integrate correctly the

affairs of these various nations it is necessary to arrange these into a chronological pattern, so that events may be correctly placed in the historical framework and contemporaneous kings and events may appear side by side. Except for the last three or four rulers of Assyria, the Assyrian and Babylonian dates for this period are generally accepted as fully established. For Egypt the chronology is not nearly so certain. See pp. 17, 124.

4. Theme. Though the books of Kings present the history of the Hebrew rulers from the death of David and the reign of Solomon to the final destruction of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, the primary purpose is not to present the facts of history for the sake of history. There is history, but it is presented with a purpose—to show how the experiences of the Hebrews relate to the plans and purposes of God. The object was not so much to write a detailed chronicle of the bald facts of history as to present the lessons of history. The compiler of these books had a deep religious motive and a very practical aim. The children of Israel were the people of God, and it was their task to fulfill the divine purpose and live out on earth the principles of the kingdom of heaven. Righteousness was to be the foundation for national prosperity. Sin could end only in ruin. If true to its divine mission, the nation would grow in strength and greatness. If kings and rulers failed to live up to the divine purpose, Israel as a people would perish. The nation could not exist without righteousness and without God.

The amazing thing is that when the Israelites had failed as a nation and were face with utter and seemingly irretrievable ruin, someone found in the dark history of Israel's sorrows and defeats something worth recording for generations to come. The lessons of Israel's failure were to bring light and hope to the world. Upon the ashes of defeat there must yet be reared a new structure of success and victory. Israel might perish, but righteousness must not perish. If the lessons of Israel's failure were learned, the world would yet find hope in God.

The age when the book of Kings came into being was the age of the prophets. In the pronouncements of this book are to be found the courage and spiritual insight of the prophets, bringing home to the hearts of men lessons from God.

The record of Kings begins with the glorious reign of Solomon, and the building of the Temple, with the nation virile and strong. It ends with the reign of a weak and infamous king, the Temple destroyed, and the land of Judah a desolate ruin. Yet this lesson of ruin was to rouse a new spirit of hope, and to focus attention upon a new and better age to come, with Israel ruled by its eternal King. "Lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it" (Jer. 30:3). "They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them" (v. 9). "Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid" (v. 10). "I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land" (ch. 32:39–41).

Even though the primary purpose of Kings is not the presentation of history as such, it contains history of great importance and remarkable accuracy. There are items concerning the Hebrew rulers such as are never found in the annals of neighboring states.

Secular annals of Israel's neighbors were written to extol the king, to glorify him as builder, hunter, or statesman, to make public his acts of piety in the service of the gods, and to relate his exploits in war. Hebrew records as they have come down to us were to glorify not man but God. So we find in these records of Kings not only the outstanding accomplishments of the Israelite rulers but also their foibles and defeats.

Kings contains items of historical importance not only concerning the kingdoms of Israel and Judah but concerning the nations round about. There are items of interest concerning Tyre and Egypt, ships of Tarshish going to Ophir for gold, Solomon's navy at Ezion-geber on the shores of the Red Sea, the queen of Sheba's coming to Jerusalem with a train of camels carrying spices and gold, Sennacherib's being slain by his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer while worshiping in the house of his god, Syrian fears of Hittite kings, the tribute to Ahab of 100,000 lambs from Mesha, the sheepmaster king of Moab, the sending of the Egyptian forces of Tirhakah to harass the Assyrian hosts besieging Lachish and Libnah, Hiram's importation of almug trees from Ophir to make pillars for the house of the Lord, the offering of the heir apparent as a burnt sacrifice upon a Moabite city wall to purchase the aid of the gods, Assyrian envoys speaking Aramaic and Hebrew in the 8th-7th centuries B.C., Zif and Ethan and Bul as month names in the early history of Canaan—all interesting and vital ingredients of the basic stuff of which history is made.

One of the outstanding features of the books of Kings is their basic chronological framework. Generally speaking, the kings are introduced in the order of their coming to the throne, regardless of whether they ruled in Israel or Judah. Two principal items of chronological information are given for each: (1) a synchronism, dating the beginning of the reign of a king of Judah in a specific year of the contemporary king of Israel, and vice versa, and (2) the length of each reign. Sometimes there are other time statements, such as intervals, regnal dates of events, or synchronisms between certain Hebrew reigns and those of other nations (see pp. 135, 145).

However, there are many difficulties in reconciling the figures given for Israel with those of Judah, and in harmonizing both with non-Biblical chronology. Even in a series of reigns beginning and ending together in Israel and Judah, the totals are not the same. Such difficulties have led some Biblical scholars to conclude that the chronology of the Hebrew kings has become hopelessly confused, through the centuries, because of copyists' errors. The efforts of others to harmonize the data have resulted in numerous theories (though not wide in range), based mostly on varying conjectural revisions of the figures in an effort to reconcile them with non-Biblical chronology (see pp. 140, 143).

Actually, the seeming discrepancies are due largely, if not altogether, to our lack of information as to the various technical methods of reckoning used in Bible times. Our increasing understanding of the basic chronological principles employed by the Hebrew scribes makes possible, through recent studies, the construction of a coherent pattern that aligns the reigns of both Hebrew kingdoms in harmony with practically all of the Biblical data, and with the generally accepted chronology of Assyria and Babylonia (see p. 143).

The dates employed in this commentary for convenient reference (see tabulation on p. 77) are derived from chronological systems of the kings based on thorough studies, and are chosen as showing the greatest degree of harmony among the Biblical data and as coming nearest to a complete solution of the problem. They are presented only as a tentative outline, for it is possible that future discoveries throwing more light on those

times may require more or less adjustment of this arrangement as a result of more exact knowledge of the chronology of the period.

5. Outline.

- I. From the Death of David to the Disruption, 1 Kings 1:1 to 11:43.
 - A. The last days of David, 1:1 to 2:11.
 1. David's last illness, 1:1–4.
 2. Adonijah's effort to obtain the kingdom, 1:5–53.
 - a. Preparations to seize the throne, 1:5–10.
 - b. Nathan confers with Bath-sheba, 1:11–14.
 - c. Bath-sheba confers with David, 1:15–21.
 - d. Nathan confers with David, 1:22–27.
 - e. David promises the kingdom to Solomon, 1:28–31.
 - f. David makes Solomon king, 1:32–40.
 - g. Adonijah hears that Solomon is king, 1:41–49.
 - h. Solomon spares the life of Adonijah, 1:50–53.
 3. David's last charge to Solomon, 2:1–9.
 4. The death of David, 2:10, 11.
 - B. The reign of Solomon, 2:12 to 11:43.
 1. The kingdom made secure to Solomon, 2:12.
 2. Solomon's dealings with his opponents, 2:13–46.
 3. Solomon's marriage to Pharaoh's daughter, 3:1.
 4. Solomon's sacrifice at Gibeon and his message from God, 3:2–15.
 5. Solomon's notable judicial decision, 3:16–28.
 6. The officers of the court, 4:1–28.
 7. The wisdom of Solomon, 4:29–34.
 8. The building of the Temple, 5:1 to 8:66.
 9. Solomon's buildings, offerings, and ships, 9:1–28.
 10. The visit of the queen of Sheba, 10:1–13.
 11. Solomon's gold, his throne, navy, and chariots, 10:14–29.
 12. Solomon's many wives and his idolatry, 11:1–8.
 13. The adversaries of Solomon, 11:9–40.
 14. The death of Solomon, 11:41–43.
- II. From the Disruption to the Fall of Samaria, 1 Kings 12:1 to 2 Kings 17:41.
 - A. Jeroboam I to Tibni, 1 Kings 12:1 to 16:22.
 1. The coronation of Rehoboam and the disruption of the kingdom, 12:1–24.
 2. Jeroboam I, 12:25 to 14:20.
 - a. Altars established at Dan and Bethel, 12:25–33.
 - b. The man of God and the disobedient prophet, 13:1–32.
 - c. Jeroboam's evil ways, 13:33, 34.
 - d. Divine judgments pronounced against the house of Jeroboam, 14:1–20.
 3. Rehoboam, 14:21–31.
 4. Abijah, 15:1–8.
 5. Asa, 15:9–24.
 6. Nadab, 15:25–27.
 7. Baasha, 15:27 to 16:7.
 8. Elah, 16:8, 9.

9. Zimri, 16:10–20.
10. Tibni, 16:21, 22.
- B. Omri to Ahaziah, 1 Kings 16:23 to 2 Kings 8:29.
 1. Omri, 1 Kings 16:23–28.
 2. Ahab, 16:29 to 22:40.
 - a. The iniquities of Ahab's reign, 16:29–34.
 - b. The rebukes by Elijah the prophet, 17:1 to 19:18.
 - c. The call of Elisha, 19:19–21.
 - d. War and peace with Syria, 20:1–43.
 - e. The seizure of Naboth's vineyard and Elijah's rebuke, 21:1–29.
 - f. The attack on Ramoth-gilead, 22:1–40.
 3. Jehoshaphat, 22:41–50.
 4. Ahaziah in Israel, 1 Kings 22:51 to 2 Kings 1:17.
 5. Joram in Israel, 2 Kings 1:17 to 8:15.
 - a. Joram's accession in the second year of Jehoram of Judah, 1:17, 18.
 - b. Elijah's ascension, 2:1–11.
 - c. Elisha succeeds Elijah, 2:12–25.
 - d. Joram's accession in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat, 3:1.
 - e. The evils of Joram's reign, 3:2, 3.
 - f. The Moabites overcome, 3:4–27.
 - g. Miracles of Elisha, 4:1–44.
 - h. Naaman cured of his leprosy, 5:1–27.
 - i. Building by the sons of the prophets, 6:1–7.
 - j. The Syrians smitten with blindness, 6:8–23.
 - k. Samaria besieged by the Syrians, 6:24 to 7:20.
 - l. Elisha's message for Hazael, 8:1–15.
 6. Jehoram in Judah, 8:16–24.
 7. Ahaziah in Judah, 8:25–29.
- C. Jehu to the end of the northern kingdom, 2 Kings 9:1 to 17:41.
 1. Jehu, 9:1 to 10:36.
 - a. Jehu anointed as king, 9:1–13.
 - b. Jehu slays Joram and Ahaziah, 9:14–29.
 - c. Jezebel slain, 9:30–37.
 - d. Jehu slays all the seed of Ahab, 10:1–17.
 - e. Jehu destroys Baal out of Israel, 10:18–28.
 - f. The evils of Jehu's reign, 10:29–36.
 2. Athaliah, 11:1–21.
 3. Jehoash in Judah, 12:1–21.
 4. Jehoahaz, 13:1–9.
 5. Jehoash in Israel, 13:10–25.
 - a. His evil deeds and war with Amaziah, 13:10–13.
 - b. The death of Elisha, 13:14–21.
 - c. Cities recovered from Syria, 13:22–25.
 6. Amaziah, 14:1–22.
 7. Jeroboam II, 14:23–29.
 8. Azariah, 15:1–7.

9. Zachariah, 15:8–12.
10. Shallum, 15:13–15.
11. Menahem, 15:16–22.
12. Pekahiah, 15:23–26.
13. Pekah, 15:27–31.
14. Jotham, 15:32–38.
15. Ahaz, 16:1–20.
16. Hoshea, 17:1–41.
- a. Revolt against Assyria and the fall of Samaria, 17:1–6.
- b. The evils of Israel that brought about its ruin, 17:7–23.
- c. The mixed worship of the Samaritans, 17:24–41.
- III. From Hezekiah to the Destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, 2 Kings 18:1 to 25:30.
 - A. A period of reform, 18:1 to 20:21.
 1. Hezekiah.
 - a. Hezekiah serves the Lord and destroys idolatry, 18:1–12.
 - b. Sennacherib's campaigns, 18:13 to 19:37.
 - c. Hezekiah cured from his serious illness, 20:1–11.
 - d. The embassy from Merodach-baladan, 20:12–19.
 - e. Hezekiah's accomplishments, 20:20, 21.
 - B. A period of decline, 21:1–26.
 1. Manasseh, 21:1–18.
 2. Amon, 21:19–26.
 - C. The last reform, 22:1 to 23:30.
 1. Josiah.
 - a. The repair of the house of the Lord, 22:1–7.
 - b. The finding of the book of the law, 22:8–20.
 - c. The gathering of the elders, 23:1, 2.
 - d. Idolatry destroyed from Judah, 23:3–20.
 - e. The Passover observed, 23:21–23.
 - f. Josiah's widespread reforms, 23:24–28.
 - g. Josiah slain by Necho, 23:29, 30.
 - D. The final decline and the end of the southern kingdom, 23:31 to 25:30.
 1. Jehoahaz, 23:31–34.
 2. Jehoiakim, 23:35 to 24:7.
 3. Jehoiachin, 24:8–16.
 4. Zedekiah, 24:17 to 25:21.
 - a. Zedekiah's evil reign, 24:17–20.
 - b. Nebuchadnezzar captures Jerusalem and takes the people to Babylon, 25:1–21.
 5. Gedaliah made governor, 25:22–26.
 6. Jehoiachin's release from prison, 25:27–30.

CHAPTER 1

1 *Abishag cherisheth David in his extreme age. 5 Adonijah, David's darling, usurpeth the kingdom. 11 By the counsel of Nathan, 15 Bath-sheba moveth the king, 22 and Nathan secondeth her. 28 David reneweth his oath to Bath-sheba. 32 Solomon, by David's appointment, being anointed king by Zadok and Nathan, the people triumph. 41 Jonathan*

bringing these news, Adonijah's guests fly. 50 Adonijah, flying to the horns of the altar, upon his good behavior is dismissed by Solomon.

1. David was old. The narrative that opens the book of Kings belongs basically to the close of the book of Samuel, being a sequel to the account there concerning David. But it forms a fitting introduction to the reign of Solomon in that it provides the setting for the narrative of Adonijah's insurrection. The reason why Solomon ascended the throne before the death of David is found in the effort of Adonijah to take the kingdom for himself. David was then old and infirm, apparently near the end of life, and in no position to act firmly at a time of crisis. The writer begins, therefore, with a description of David's condition.

David had reached the age of seventy (2 Sam. 5:4). This makes him older at the time of death than any other Hebrew king of whom the record has been preserved. His life had been difficult and trying. Hardship, suffering, exposure, and sorrow had worn down a constitution once robust, and now the king found himself robbed of his strength and greatly enfeebled. He might also have suffered from some wasting disease. And now, added to his bodily afflictions, was rebellion on the part of one of his sons.

In depicting the incidents of the narrative the author shows that he is well informed. He reveals vivid details known only to one intimately acquainted with the inner life of the court. He writes, not for the glory or benefit of the king, but for posterity. There is no need to point out morals—each poignant detail of the narrative speaks for itself. The hard facts of life are recorded exactly as they took place—exactly as they do take place in a world where proud and victorious monarchs and even earnest men of God are not free from reaping the harvests of the seeds that have been sown.

2. His servants. These were royal attendants, ministers of the king who looked after his personal wants and were responsible to the nation for his welfare. Josephus terms them "physicians" (*Antiquities* vii. 14. 3). The proposed remedy of seeking a healthy young woman to communicate warmth and vigor to a numb and enfeebled body was employed in ancient times when medical knowledge was limited. Similar prescriptions can be cited in medieval Europe and the modern East.

3. A Shunammite. Shunem, now called *Sôlem*, was in Issachar (Joshua 19:17, 18), on an eminence in the plain of Esdraelon, 6.5 mi. (10.4 km.) southwest of Tabor. The Shunammite was from the same place as the Shulamite maiden of Solomon's Song (S. of Sol. 6:13), but there is no evidence that the two were identical.

4. Ministered to him. The maiden selected was not merely to assist in providing life and vitality to the ailing monarch but also to act as nurse and attendant, to stand before him for the performance of such duties as would serve the comfort and health of the king.

5. Adonijah. The fourth son of David (2 Sam. 3:4; 1 Chron. 3:2). The elder sons, Amnon and Absalom were dead, and Chileab presumably so, for nothing further is heard of him. Thus Adonijah seemed next in line for the throne.

I will be king. Adonijah no doubt alleged that he had a just claim to the throne. Presuming upon his seniority and puffed up with pride, he determined to take what steps were necessary to secure the kingdom. Even though he must have known of his father's plans, he was willing to secure the throne by force, if necessary, against what obviously was the divine arrangement (1 Chron. 22:5–9). The younger brother Solomon was better qualified than Adonijah to serve as ruler of Israel (PP 749), but the elder was determined that he would be king, no matter what the consequences might be to the country or to

those who might be persuaded to throw in their lot with him. The results are always tragic when reason and discretion are thrown to the winds in the service of self.

6. Not displeased him. Adonijah was a spoiled child—spoiled by an overindulgent father. As a child this aspirant to the throne had been allowed to have his own way, and now he was beyond restraint. Many a life has been ruined by an excess of paternal affection.

Goodly man. Adonijah was handsome and attractive, and therefore no doubt popular with many of the people. But personal beauty is not among the most essential qualifications for position or leadership. Adonijah's natural endowments had brought vanity, foolish conceit, and selfish ambition. His youthful passions were stronger than his principles, and his impulses trampled upon his convictions. He was a "goodly man" in appearance only. It is of far greater importance for a man to be good of heart.

His mother bare. Heb. *yaledah*, "she bore." "His mother" has been supplied by the translator. Maacah was the mother of Absalom (2 Sam. 3:3), whereas Haggith was the mother of Adonijah (2 Sam. 3:4). A better rendition would be, "He was born [next] after Absalom."

7. Conferred with Joab. With the support of the commander in chief, Joab, Adonijah hoped to win over the army, and through the high priest, Abiathar, to secure also the support of the priesthood. Both Joab and Abiathar had been very close to David and had performed noble service for him in difficult and troublous times. Joab was a hard, bold, and at times unscrupulous man, imperious on occasion and even disobedient to the royal commands. Abiathar was the son of Ahimelech, who suffered death in David's cause. Abiathar had been one of David's firmest friends, having been with him in his wanderings when he fled from Saul (1 Sam. 22:20–23), serving him when he was king at Hebron (2 Sam. 15:35), and fleeing with him when Absalom rebelled (2 Sam. 15:24, 29, 35, 36; 17:15; 19:11). The reason for his defection at this time is not clear, but it might be that he did not view Adonijah's conduct as an actual rebellion. David's designation of Solomon for the throne might have been looked upon as springing from excessive fondness, and the assumption of the crown by the eldest son might have seemed only right and justifiable. On his part, Joab may have given support to Adonijah because of a grudge against the king for demoting him (2 Sam. 19:13).

8. Zadok. High priest with Ahimelech (see on 2 Sam. 8:17) and after his death, with Abiathar (2 Sam. 20:25). Both Zadok and Abiathar remained true to David at the revolt of Absalom, being sent back with the ark to Jerusalem when David fled (2 Sam. 15:24–29, 35). The exact relationship between the two priests is not clear, but it may be that inasmuch as Zadok served at the tabernacle of witness at Gibeon (1 Chron. 16:39), Abiathar probably served at the sanctuary containing the ark at Zion (see 1 Chron. 16:1; cf. 2 Chron. 5:2).

Benaiah. The chief of the Cherethites and Pelethites (2 Sam. 8:18; 20:23; 1 Chron. 18:17), David's bodyguard (2 Sam. 23:20–23) who accompanied him on the occasion of Absalom's revolt (2 Sam. 15:18). From their names arises the generally accepted opinion that they were recruited from Cretans and Philistines. These troops were not under Joab's command, and Joab no doubt looked jealously upon Benaiah as a rival.

Nathan. A prophet active in the days of David and very close to the king. Nathan could be counted upon by Solomon to be among his chief supporters. It was he who had given the infant prince the name of Jedidiah, "darling of Jehovah" (2 Sam. 12:25).

9. Slew sheep. When Saul was made king at Gilgal “they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings” (1 Sam. 11:15). When Samuel was called to anoint David as king he was instructed by the Lord to offer a sacrifice, to which Jesse and his sons were called (1 Sam. 16:1–5). So when Absalom seized the throne he also offered sacrifices (2 Sam. 15:12). Adonijah’s sacrifice was a peace offering such as was offered on occasions of joy or thankfulness, a sacrifice to which many might be invited.

En-rogel. A deep spring below Jerusalem, just beyond the juncture of the Kidron and Hinnom valleys. According to Josephus it was in the king’s garden (*Antiquities* vii. 14. 4), outside of the city. It is known today as *Bîr ‘Ayyûb*, “Job’s Well.”

10. He called not. The fact that Solomon was not invited to the sacrifice gives proof that Adonijah was well aware of his father’s wish that the kingdom should go to Solomon and that Adonijah was determined to keep David’s plans from being carried out. By not inviting Solomon, Adonijah both betrayed his own plans and purpose and gave occasion for the frustration of his endeavors.

11. Nathan spake. Nathan’s act was in line with his responsibilities as a prophet of God and a faithful servant of the state. He saw that the carrying out of the plot would be directed against the accomplishment of the divine purpose, and with characteristic resolution and dispatch he took the lead in setting into operation effective moves destined to thwart the conspirators. Bath-sheba well knew that the usurpation by Adonijah would, as a matter of course, be sealed by her son’s blood and her own as well. She, more than anyone else, would be in a position to approach the king for the taking of such steps as the crisis required. With great wisdom and prudence Nathan proposed a course of action destined to cut short the conspiracy and to prevent a repetition of the disastrous experience of Absalom.

15. Bath-sheba went in. The mother of Solomon had the freedom of the palace and quickly made her way into the king’s presence, ill as he was. As she bowed low with the humble prostration of a suppliant, David recognized immediately that something of unusual import had prompted the call and he asked for details. The fact that David knew nothing of what was going on, that he had not been consulted by Adonijah concerning his proposed plans, and that Nathan was first informed of them at the moment of their execution, shows how secretly the affair had been managed. The intrigue revealed that Adonijah was not moved by a clear conscience. Bath-sheba began by reminding her husband of his promise to her that her son Solomon would succeed to the throne, and then abruptly informed him that in spite of this promise Adonijah was already king. Adonijah had presumed to take the kingdom while David himself was still on the throne. In such a situation the eyes of all Israel were on David to see what his move would be. Bath-sheba reminded him of his responsibility to the nation at this hour of crisis, and of the fact that if he did not act he would bear the blame for whatever fate would befall her and her son.

22. Also came in. At the climactic moment, Nathan entered and interrupted the queen with his urgent report. Bath-sheba adroitly withdrew (see v. 28), allowing Nathan the opportunity to make the same startling announcement, that Adonijah reigned. Surely this could not be without the command of the king! But how could David have given such orders as these? Why had he done it without a word to his trusted counselor and friend? Each question was an implied rebuke, a thrust at the king for having had part in a procedure so uncalled for, an outrage aimed directly at Solomon, Benaiah, and Zadok.

How could David have turned his back on these men who had been so close to him? The questions were asked, of course, merely to draw a vehement denial from the king. The denial must necessarily entail a royal rebuke upon the whole outrageous plot, for nothing like this could even be conceived of as having taken place without the will of the king, unless it were a plot directly against the throne. Nathan in his attitude of assumed injury was only ensuring the success of his mission, for it was now the king's turn to be outraged and to direct the immediate steps to be taken to foil the conspirators in their plot.

28. *Call me Bath-sheba.* The queen was in readiness, awaiting the next move in the swiftly unfolding drama. She approached the king with confidence, for he had given to her his word, and she knew that it would be carried out. David reassured her, renewing his oath, and promising that it would be fulfilled that very day.

32. *Call me Zadok.* Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah had not been called by Adonijah, but they now were called by the king. They were of no service to Adonijah in his conspiracy against the throne, but they were to be the key figures in the support of the throne. David, though "old and stricken in years," is fired again by the characteristic energy of his youth. He thinks clearly and acts swiftly. Terse directions are given as to the part each should play. The sudden flash of energy and resoluteness of action is in striking contrast to the timidity and despondency with which David, when much younger, had received the news of Absalom's rebellion (2 Sam. 15:14). At that time David knew that he had been in error, and that he was receiving a chastisement from God. Now all that was gone, and he knew that God was on his side.

33. *Mine own mule.* An animal undoubtedly well known to the people as reserved for the sole use of the king and symbolizing to them the prerogatives and privileges of royalty. If Solomon were seen riding that mule, the people would know that he was king.

Gihon. The site selected for the ceremony was Gihon, the famous spring of early Jerusalem on the southeastern slope of Ophel. It was situated just east of the City of David and is known today by the name '*Ain Sitti Maryam*, "Spring of our Lady Mary." This was the spring to which the Jebusites constructed a tunnel so that water could be secured without venturing outside the city walls. Hezekiah later constructed a tunnel from Gihon to carry water to the west side of the City of David (2 Chron. 32:30), to the Upper Pool, or Pool of Siloam, and constructed about the latter a wall so that water might be available in case of a siege (2 Chron. 33:14). This location where Solomon was to be anointed was over half a mile up the valley from En-rogel, where the festivities of Adonijah's coronation were in progress.

34. *Anoint him.* The ceremony of anointing was to be carried out by Zadok as priest and Nathan as prophet—both being empowered by their official prerogatives to perform the rite. Samuel, who anointed David (1 Sam. 16:13), was both prophet and priest. Jehu was anointed by one of the sons of the prophets sent by Elisha (2 Kings 9:1–3).

35. *Appointed him.* David evidently claimed the right to name his successor. This was in line with recognized Eastern custom. Alyattes named Croesus; Cyrus appointed Cambyses; and Darius nominated Xerxes. Herodotus declares it to be a law of the Persians for a king always to nominate a successor before departing on an expedition. A still more absolute right of naming a successor was exercised by certain of the emperors of Rome and occasionally by the caliphs. See on chs. 1:39 and 2:24.

Israel and over Judah. An intended distinction between Israel and Judah is here noticeable. Evidences of distinction go back to the time when the land was first divided among the tribes (Joshua 11:21; 18:5). David reigned first over Judah at Hebron (2 Sam. 2:4), and then was approached by the elders of Israel in regard to becoming their king (2 Sam. 5:1–3). At the time of Absalom’s rebellion the division between Israel and Judah had become distinctly more marked (2 Sam. 15:10, 13; 18:6, 7; 43>19:41–43; 2>20:1, 2).

39. God save king Solomon. This is an idiomatic translation of the Hebrew, which reads literally “May King Solomon live.” David’s well-ordered plans were promptly and effectively carried out. The new king was anointed with the holy oil from the tabernacle, the anointing indicating that he held his office by the Lord’s appointment and with the divine benediction. After the sounding of the trumpet, the cry, “May king Solomon live,” gave notice that Solomon was king and that he had been accepted by the people. The official proclamation came first from a herald in accord with David’s command (v. 34) and then the cry was taken up by the people (v. 40).

41. When Joab heard. With Solomon was a group of people who hailed the coronation of the new king with unrestrained delight and with shouts of joyous acclaim. With Adonijah was a company of conspirators just completing their festivities, which must, however, have been clouded by a measure of ill-concealed anxiety and apprehension. The sound of the trumpet that was to the one group a note of triumph came to the other as a note of doom. The quick ear of the seasoned warrior, Joab, was not slow in catching the significance of what was going on.

42. Jonathan. This son of one of the conspirators had no doubt been left behind as a spy to ascertain what was going on in Jerusalem and the palace. He had previously risked his life in the carrying of confidential information (2 Sam. 15:27, 36; 17:17–21)—then, however, in the service of David.

Good tidings. The tidings were anything but good to the conspirators, and Adonijah could hardly have expected them to be such. He spoke as he did to reassure himself and his accomplices.

43. Our lord king David. As long as David was alive, or until such a time as a successor was officially appointed, David’s word was law. Unless Adonijah was ready to support his revolt by force of arms, he and those with him could only acknowledge that the will of the old king was still the will of the state, and that his decrees would be carried out.

46. Solomon sitteth on the throne. Facts were facts, unwelcome though they might be to the conspirators. The significant fact was that Solomon, not Adonijah, sat on the royal throne. He had been formally chosen by David as his successor; he had been caused to ride to the place of his coronation on the royal mule; he had been solemnly anointed; the royal guard was with him; Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah were all at his side; the hearts of the people were his; everything had been done properly and in order, in accord with the will of David and with the evident approval of God; the utmost publicity had been given to the whole transaction; and the only thing for the rebels now to do was to acknowledge that Solomon indeed was king. See on v. 35.

47. The king bowed himself. No earthly monarch lives forever. The fact that David knew that his end had come and that the royal scepter must now fall into the hands of another is not without a note of sadness. But David quietly accepted his fate, prostrating himself upon his bed in humble acknowledgment of the fact that his successor sat upon

the throne. His bowing was not to the new king but to God, in grateful thanksgiving for all His blessings and watchful care.

49. *Were afraid.* Jonathan's recital of what had taken place filled Adonijah and his guests with terror and consternation. Without ceremony, Adonijah's erstwhile adherents arose and fled. That fact indicates that they recognized the utter hopelessness of the cause to which they had lent their support.

50. *Horns of the altar.* The horns of the altar were projections from its four corners (Ex. 27:2; 308:2; 38:2), upon which blood was sprinkled (Ex. 29:12; Lev. 4:7; Eze. 43:20). To take hold of the horns was to claim the right of sanctuary. This right was denied to a willful murderer (Ex. 21:14), and thus was denied to Joab after the death of David (1 Kings 2:28–31). Adonijah, by fleeing to the altar, conceded the fact that he was guilty of a deed for which he might be executed. By acknowledging Solomon as king (v. 51), he may have attempted to make a public acknowledgment of his mistake and to represent his usurpation as an act of haste and inadvertency for which sanctuary might be justly claimed.

53. *Go to thine house.* The usurpation of Adonijah happily ended without bloodshed. David had shown his wisdom in dealing with the matter by setting up Solomon as king and allowing events to take their natural course rather than by sending troops to put down the usurper. Solomon took the course of wisdom and mercy by extending pardon, yet at the same time making it clear that clemency had been extended only upon condition of consequent good behavior. If Adonijah showed himself a worthy man, living quietly as a private citizen and submitting to the new regime, he would remain unmolested. But if not, his life would be imperiled. Adonijah bowed to the king and submitted himself to his inglorious fate.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–53PP 749, 750

1–7PP 749

32–40PK 25

CHAPTER 2

1 David, having given a charge to Solomon, 3 of religiousness, 5 of Joab, 7 of Barzillai, 8 of Shimei, 10 dieth. 12 Solomon succeedeth. 13 Adonijah, moving Bath-sheba to sue unto Solomon for Abishag, is put to death. 26 Abiathar, having his life given him, is deprived of the priesthood. 28 Joab fleeing to the horns of the altar is there slain. 35 Benaiah is put in Joab's room, and Zadok in Abiathar's. 36 Shimei, confined to Jerusalem, by occasion of going thence to Gath, is put to death.

1. *Now the days of David.* This chapter continues the narrative of the previous chapter, with the same vivid detail and graphic style. The account as given in Chronicles omits the story of Adonijah's insurrection and gives instead an account of a great assemblage of "all the princes of Israel, with the priests and the Levites," "the captains of the companies that ministered to the king," and the leading men of all the realm (1 Chron. 23:1, 2; chs. 28, 29), for the making of Solomon "king the second time" (ch. 29:22). Both Saul (1 Sam. 11:14, 15) and David (2 Sam. 5:1–3) had been set apart a second time as king, and thus it was also in the case of Solomon. His first anointing was on quick notice on a rather impromptu occasion, called for by the pressure of circumstances, at which time only a few of the people from the immediate vicinity could be present. Thus it was

only fitting that there should be a second and more general coronation, with due solemnity and display, before the representatives of the entire nation.

2. Way of all the earth. This expression reminds us of the words of Joshua (Joshua 23:14) as he faced the end. Death shows no partiality. The greatest heroes of earth take their place with the lowliest of men and both go together to a common grave. Worldly distinctions are only for a moment, and the glories of kings disappear wherever death holds sway.

Be thou strong. David's thoughts are not of himself but of his son, not of the past but of the future. He speaks as a loving father, a soldier and patriot, and above all as a man who has shown himself every whit a king. He charges Solomon to be strong as he undertakes the responsibilities of leadership, even as Moses charged Joshua (Deut. 31:7), and as the Lord Himself had charged Joshua (Joshua 1:7).

Shew thyself a man. In spite of his youth, Solomon now was king, and particularly as such he must show himself a man. He was to be a man in full control of himself and of his people, fearless, above bribery and corruption. He was to seek first, not his own interests, but those of the people whom he had been appointed to serve and of the God whose representative he was.

Keep the charge. David's charge to Solomon was, above all, of a religious nature. Solomon was first to be true to God. The Israelites were the people of God, and Solomon was to rule over them as a servant of God. The last words of David to Solomon were not so much those of a father to his son, but rather those of a head of Israel, a theocratic state, to his divinely appointed successor upon the throne. It is from this standpoint that the whole discourse is to be viewed. As king of Israel, Solomon was "to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord" (1 Chron. 28:5). When he had taken the kingdom, he "sat on the throne of the Lord" (1 Chron. 29:23). Israel was a nation of which Jehovah was king and of which the human ruler was only a servant and representative of the heavenly King.

Walk in his ways. The king was to know the ways of God and to walk in them, not only for his own best interests but also as an example to the people. The ways of God were ways of righteousness and peace, and would bring to him blessing and prosperity.

Keep his statutes. The statutes are the provisions of the law. God gave His commandments to the people, and then prescribed further regulations to make clear exactly what obedience entailed in specific cases. Such detailed statutes, judgments, and testimonies are found in the law of Moses. There are ceremonial ordinances, civil statutes, laws of health, as well as moral requirements.

Mayest prosper. All the laws of God were given for the benefit of man. God placed His children under law because He desired to see them happy and prosperous. His prescriptions and injunctions were not given to display His supreme authority but to ensure the welfare and happiness of the children of earth. Walking in harmony with the laws of Heaven, man was to find joy, peace, contentment of spirit, health of body, and fullness of life. Disobeying those laws would bring trouble, sorrow, sickness, woe, pain, and death. This has been made plain at the beginning of Israel's history. It was constantly pointed out by the prophets down to the very end. "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. 1:19, 20; cf. Jer. 7:5-7). When Israel finally perished, it was made clear that the reason was failure to comply with the commandments of the Lord (2 Kings 17:7-20).

4. *May continue his word.* God's original promise was made to David through Nathan the prophet (2 Sam. 7:11–17), and later, it seems, directly to David himself (Ps. 89:3, 4). The promise was that David's house and his kingdom would be established forever. The fulfillment of this promise to the children of David was on condition of continued obedience to God's commands (Ps. 132:12). David reminds Solomon of these conditions in order to encourage continued fidelity on his part and obedience to the Lord's commands.

6. *Do therefore.* Joab had murdered Abner (2 Sam. 3:27–30). David, at the time, made it clear he had had no part in the crime, and announced that in due time the Lord would “reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness” (2 Sam. 3:31–39). Joab had also murdered Amasa, whom David had just appointed to take Joab's place (2 Sam. 19:13; 20:8–10). The death of these two was to be avenged. At the time these crimes were committed David was not in a position to punish Joab, owing to Joab's knowledge of David's part in the death of Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam. 11:14–25). But the dictates of justice demanded that such crimes as Joab had committed should not go unpunished. Therefore, David, speaking not as a private individual who had received many years of hard and faithful service from the man he now condemned, but as a theocratic king, gave directions that Joab's crimes should be punished by a man whose hands were clean and who owed Joab nothing. It should be remembered, further, that Joab was guilty also of acts that David does not here expressly mention, such as the slaying of Absalom against David's express command (2 Sam. 18:14, 15), and his recent treason in the support of Adonijah (1 Kings 1:7), which no doubt had already embittered Solomon against him.

7. *Shew kindness.* A pleasant contrast is David's remembrance of Barzillai's hospitality to him on the occasion of his flight from Absalom (2 Sam. 19:31–39). To eat at the king's table meant to receive support from the royal treasury (2 Sam. 9:7; 1 Kings 18:19; Neh. 5:17). Barzillai had a son called Chimham (2 Sam. 19:37). Some have thought that Jeremiah's reference to “the habitation of Chimham” (Jer. 41:17) as being by Bethlehem, indicates that David had given the son of Barzillai an inheritance there from property that was especially his own.

8. *Shimei.* This man, who had acted so traitorously toward David, might prove a source of danger to Solomon in those turbulent times (see vs. 36–46).

10. *David slept.* The account of David's death is very brief. The record of Chronicles adds only that “he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour” (1 Chron. 29:28).

Buried. Evidently in Mt. Zion, on royal ground near David's palace (2 Sam. 5:9). The “sepulchres of David,” the tombs of the successors of David, are mentioned by Nehemiah (Neh. 3:16), and were probably south of the Temple (Eze. 43:7–9). They were undoubtedly excavated in the rock underlying Jerusalem. Josephus reports that the tomb was rifled for its treasures by Hyrcanus and later by Herod (*Antiquities* vii. 15. 3; xvi. 7. 1). It was in existence in NT times (Acts 2:29), but its exact location is at present unknown. The so-called Tombs of the Kings, once thought to be the mausoleum of the kings of Judah, actually dates from the 1st century A.D.

11. *Seven years.* More exactly, “seven years and six months” (2 Sam. 5:5; 1 Chron. 3:4).

12. *Was established greatly.* Compare v. 46, which, after the mention of the deaths of Adonijah, Joab, and Shimei, and the humbling of Abiathar, states that “the kingdom was

established in the hand of Solomon.” It seems clear that during the early part of Solomon’s reign there existed elements of disaffection and unrest which threatened the establishment of the young king’s throne. Solomon dealt swiftly and firmly with these forces of unrest and revolt, and as a result the kingdom was firmly established under his control.

13. *Comest thou peaceably?* The very appearance of Adonijah upon the scene raised a question concerning his intentions. Had he reconciled himself to his fate and was he ready to support Solomon, or was he still hoping by some means to secure the kingdom?

15. *The kingdom was mine.* Adonijah’s reference to his unsuccessful attempt to secure the throne gives evidence that the matter was still very much alive within his heart. Bath-sheba’s apprehensions seem to have been well founded.

From the Lord. A seemingly pious acceptance of the divine will, but actually an ill-concealed purpose of endeavoring to secure by craft the kingdom which he could not secure by force.

17. *Give me Abishag.* He might, perhaps, as well have asked for the kingdom. The real burden of his heart was probably not a romantic concern for the fair Abishag, but the kingdom he hoped to acquire by possession of her. In the ancient Orient the wives of a king were taken over by his successor. So David, when he succeeded Saul, took over his wives (2 Sam. 12:8). Absalom, in accordance with the advice of Ahithophel, went in to his father’s concubines in the sight of all the people, thus giving public announcement that he had assumed the rights of his father’s throne (2 Sam. 16:20–22). Abishag was doubtless looked upon as the last wife, or at least the last concubine, of David. For Adonijah now to ask for Abishag could be construed as asking for the throne itself. Yet before Bath-sheba he played the part of a devout and repentant young man, reconciled to his fate, and needing only the fair young maiden to soothe his aching heart.

18. *Speak for thee.* Why was Bath-sheba willing to speak for Adonijah before the king? Did she think him sincere, or did she see through his wiles but consent to his request in the hope that his heart might be set at rest and the kingdom thus made more sure for her son?

19. *Bowed himself unto her.* The honor Solomon showed toward his mother provided a fitting example for the people of his day, even as it does for us today. In ancient courts the queen mother was often highly honored.

22. *The kingdom also.* Perhaps Bath-sheba did not see anything dangerous in Adonijah’s request, but Solomon instantly did. To have granted Adonijah’s request would have provided strong encouragement to his pretensions. Those sympathetic with him would have a firm footing on which to rest the elder brother’s claims.

For Abiathar. The words are not clear, but the sense is. Solomon is giving vent to his disgust at his mother’s shortsightedness for having allowed herself to be drawn into such a situation as this. Things were already bad enough without her lending her aid to the efforts of Adonijah to secure the throne. Adonijah was, after all, the elder brother, and many would think he had a just claim to the throne. And at his side were two of the most influential men of the land, Abiathar, the high priest, and Joab, the commander in chief, aiding and abetting him in every possible way. Now the king’s mother had allowed herself to be taken in to the extent that she was actually asking for nothing less than the kingdom for the elder son. Solomon said in effect, “Why ask only for Abishag, why not ask for the kingdom as well? He is my elder brother, and does it not by right belong to

him? And in proof of his claims, does he not have with him Abiathar the priest and Joab as well, in support of his cause and giving evidence to all that he indeed is in the right?" Bath-sheba evidently understood the needed rebuke.

23. *Against his own life.* The request of Adonijah was tantamount to treason and as such was punishable by death. The young man was a dangerous character, and his plottings must not be allowed to jeopardize the security of the state. Thus Solomon reasoned.

24. *Which hath established.* The scheming of Adonijah was directed not only against man but also against God. It was the Lord who had established Solomon upon the throne as the successor of his father David, but now Adonijah was apparently making plans to found a dynasty through union with Abishag. That must not be permitted. The previous conspiracy had been pardoned, but this new attempt at rebellion against God could not be condoned. Solomon was king by God's choice, sitting upon the throne of David, which was to be established forever. Knowing that what he was doing was in accord with the will of Heaven, Solomon, with a solemn adjuration, gave judgment that Adonijah be put to death that day.

26. *Unto Abiathar.* Solomon was not content with halfway measures. He probably correctly surmised that in this new attempt to secure the crown Adonijah had accomplices, including Abiathar.

To Anathoth. Abiathar received mercy because of his long friendship with David in his adversity. Instead of forfeiting his life, he would merely be deprived of his office and sent home. Anathoth was a city of priests in the territory of Benjamin (Joshua 21:17–19; 1 Chron. 6:60). The town lay 3 mi. to the northeast of Jerusalem. It is best known as the birthplace of Jeremiah (Jer. 1:1; 32:7).

27. *That he might fulfil.* The prophecy fulfilled was that of 1 Sam. 2:30–35; 3:11–14. Abiathar was a descendant of the house of Eli and was the sole survivor of the slaughter of the sons of Ahimelech by Doeg (1 Sam. 22:9–23; 23:6). With the deposition of Abiathar, the high priesthood passed from the house of Ithamar to the house of Eleazar, the elder son of Aaron, to which Zadok belonged (Num. 25:11–13; 1 Chron. 24:1–6). Both Abiathar and Zadok had hitherto acted as priests, with some measure of coordination between the two while the tabernacle was at Gibeon under Zadok's charge, and the ark in Mt. Zion under Abiathar. After the disgrace of Abiathar the dignity of the office of the high priesthood passed to Zadok.

It must not be thought that the purpose of Solomon in humbling Abiathar was merely for the purpose of bringing about the fulfillment of prophecy. His act was prompted solely by the merits of the case. God decrees because He foresees.

29. *Fall upon him.* Upon receipt of the news of Adonijah's death, Joab fled for sanctuary. If he had felt himself entirely free from complicity in the recent conspiracy, he would hardly have feared for his life. Solomon's words in pronouncing sentence upon him make no reference to anything except the old crimes mentioned in the dying charge of David. One of the reasons, no doubt, was that sanctuary was denied in cases of willful murder (Ex. 21:14). The laws against the shedding of blood were so rigid that it is doubtful whether a murderer could be pardoned according to law (Num. 35:16–34; Deut. 19:11–13). If sentence against willful murder were not executed, the land would carry the guilt of blood (Num. 35:33). The altar provided asylum only for those who had killed unwittingly, but this was not the case with Joab. Knowing well the law, Joab knew the

fate in store for him. Rough and hardy soldier though he was, “too hard” even for the rugged warrior David, the old captain met his doom without a word of remonstrance or an act of resistance. He was guilty of crimes for which he knew he could present no defense.

36. *Go not forth.* The situation within the realm was such that Solomon deemed it necessary to keep a close watch on all suspected persons. Restless Shimei was among those who might be expected to throw in their lot against the king whenever the opportunity might come. He was known to be an adherent of the house of Saul and a bitter foe of the house of David. To restrict Shimei to the confines of Jerusalem was only a reasonable precaution against treason.

37. *Kidron.* The valley running north and south, just outside the east wall of Jerusalem. Beyond it lay what later became known as the Mt. of Olives. At the present time no brook flows in this valley except during the rainy season.

The reference to crossing the Kidron shows that it was for the purpose of preventing him from returning to his native domain, Bahurim (2 Sam. 16:5), where he would have the greatest influence and the best opportunity of stirring up trouble. Bahurim was in the vicinity of the Mt. of Olives on the way from Jerusalem to the Jordan.

39. *Gath.* A city formerly held by the Philistines, but taken by David (1 Chron. 18:1). It is here said to have a king, but the king was probably under the control of the Hebrew monarchy.

40. *Shimei arose.* The narrative gives no hint that Shimei’s journey to Gath for the sake of bringing back his servants was not made in good faith. But the fact remains that he had been disobedient to the king’s command and had broken his own solemn vow. It is upon this that stress is laid. If Shimei had wished to remain true to his oath, he should have informed the king of the circumstances, made request for permission to go and bring his servants back, and awaited the king’s command. But by taking matters into his own hands, and by venturing into a foreign land that had often been at war with Solomon’s father, Shimei was certainly laying himself open to suspicion.

42. *Called for Shimei.* Solomon did not pass judgment upon Shimei without due consideration of the case and without setting all the facts clearly before the accused. With searching questions Solomon made it clear that Shimei was without defense. Shimei had given his solemn oath that he would abide by the king’s decree. Why had he not kept that oath? The answer of silence became the sentence of death.

44. *Is privy to.* No man knows so well all the hidden wickedness of the heart as the transgressor himself. With his life at stake, Shimei knew that his own wicked heart was the most telling witness against himself.

Thine own head. God is not an arbitrary executioner of the sentence against transgression. Sinners reap in judgment what they themselves have sown. It was Shimei’s own iniquity, not merely the judgment of an earthly king, that condemned him to death.

46. *Kingdom was established.* See on v. 12.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–4PK 26; PP 753

2 MH 174

2, 3 5T 509

CHAPTER 3

1 *Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter. 2 High places being in use, Solomon sacrificed at Gibeon. 5 Solomon at Gibeon, in the choice which God gave him, preferring wisdom, obtaineth wisdom, riches, and honour. 16 Solomon's judgment between the two harlots maketh him renowned.*

1. Affinity with Pharaoh. This verse is closely connected with the preceding one. Solomon's first objective after taking the throne was to establish internal security. That end achieved, he was in a position to give his attention to outside interests. The first item mentioned is the royal marriage to a daughter of Pharaoh. In the case of the reign of David over Judah, there is also first the mention of measures taken to ensure internal security (2 Sam. 2:1–32; 3:1), followed by a mention of David's sons and wives (2 Sam. 3:2–5), and after his anointing as king of Israel (2 Sam. 5:1–3), the first item reported is the establishment of his power over Israel (2 Sam. 5:6–12), followed once more by a mention of his wives and concubines (2 Sam. 5:13–16).

The Pharaoh with whom Solomon is mentioned as having made affinity is believed to be one of the kings of the Twenty-first Dynasty, whose capital was at Tanis in Lower Egypt. It must have been a predecessor of Shishak (Sheshonk), founder of the Twenty-second Dynasty, who invaded Judah in the fifth year of Rehoboam (1 Kings 14:25). The Pharaoh with whom Solomon made affinity is thought by many authorities to have been Psousennes.

The time when Solomon made an alliance with Egypt was a period when Egypt was weak and divided. It also was a period of weakness for Assyria and Babylon, and the once powerful Hittites were no longer a nation. Such a period of general weakness in the Near East offered an unparalleled opportunity for David and Solomon to establish a strong nation for the people of God in the land He had set apart for them.

Took Pharaoh's daughter. Political alliances were frequently sealed by marriages between the royal families. No rebuke is given by the sacred historian for Solomon's marriage with this idolatrous princess. He simply records the incident. But his absence of censure places no sanction upon the act. The marriage was in direct violation of the command of God. Though Pharaoh's daughter forsook the religion of her native Egypt and threw in her lot with the Hebrews, among whom she had come to live (PK 53), this salutary result did not justify the foreign marriage. Pharaoh took the city of Gezer from the Canaanites and presented it to his daughter as a dowry and to the nation of Israel (1 Kings 9:16).

City of David. A distinction is here made between David's city and Jerusalem. The ancient citadel of Zion, stronghold of the Jebusites (2 Sam. 5:7–9), was situated on the southern end of the eastern ridge, to the west of the spring Gihon in the Kidron Valley, and south of the area where the Temple was later to be constructed.

His own house. The residence of Pharaoh's daughter in the City of David was only temporary, until Solomon had constructed his own palace. This palace was to be north of David's city, in the Temple area. A separate house was later to be built for his Egyptian wife (1 Kings 7:8).

2. Sacrificed in high places. According to the law of Moses, sacrifices were to be brought to the tabernacle and were not to be offered in the open field (Lev. 17:3–5). The Lord had promised to designate a special place where the sacrifices were to be brought (Deut. 12:10, 11). Before the selection of this central place, however, sacrifices were offered at various places throughout the country (Judges 6:25, 26; 13:16; 1 Sam. 7:10;

13:9; 14:35; 1 Chron. 21:26), with a seeming unconsciousness of guilt on the part of the worshipers. Two prime reasons may be given for the prohibition of sacrifices at high places: (1) to keep the Israelites from the places where the corrupting idolatrous worship of the land was carried on; (2) to prevent the springing up of unauthorized sanctuaries of the Lord, where false practices might be developed.

3. Only he sacrificed. This is not to be construed as evidence of idolatrous worship at this time in Solomon's life. The record has just stated that he "loved the Lord" and was "walking in the statutes of David." But he did not observe the Mosaic directives forbidding sacrifice except at a central shrine. Although this directive had been ignored during the period of the judges and even under Samuel and David (v. 2), Israel had now come to a new hour in its religious experience. It was beginning to be recognized that God would no longer condone a situation that He had formerly "winked at" (Acts 17:30).

4. Went to Gibeon. Gibeon was nearly 6 mi. (9.6 km.) northwest of Jerusalem. After the success of the measures taken to establish the kingdom Solomon held a great festival at Gibeon for the whole nation (2 Chron. 1:1–3), in grateful thanksgiving to the Lord for the blessings conferred. The tabernacle that had been built in the wilderness was located there (2 Chron. 1:3). It will be recalled that, long before, the Gibeonites had deceived Joshua, and accordingly had been sentenced to be "hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God" (Joshua 9:23).

5. In a dream. In the days of Solomon's father David, the will of the Lord had been revealed to men through the prophets Nathan and Gad (2 Sam. 7:2–17; 12:1–14; 24:11–14), and through special services rendered by the priests (1 Sam. 23:9–12; 30:7, 8). In addition, David himself also frequently spoke under inspiration, as, for example, when he wrote the psalms (see 2 Sam. 23:2). Solomon received his communication by a dream. God frequently chose dreams as a method of revealing Himself to His servants, for example, to Abraham (Gen. 15:12), Jacob (Gen. 28:12–16), Joseph (Gen. 37:5–10), and Daniel (Dan. 2:19; 7:1). He also spoke by dreams to those outside the ranks of Israel, for example, to Abimelech (Gen. 20:3–7), Laban (Gen. 31:24), Pharaoh and his servants (Gen. 40:5; 41:1–8), the Midianite (Judges 7:13), and Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:1; 4:10–18).

Ask. God knew well what Solomon needed, but He bade him ask. The incident was to be a test to the young king. By the nature of his request Solomon would reveal the nature of his heart.

7. A little child. Solomon is not here conveying the thought that he is a child in years, but that he regards himself as a child in experience. The words are those of humility. With the heavy responsibilities of the nation resting upon him, he felt himself unequal to the task and in need of divine help. At the time of his accession he was already married and probably a father. This is suggested by the fact that he had a son 41 years old (2 Chron. 12:13) at the time of his death, after a reign of 40 years (1 Kings 11:42).

9. An understanding heart. Man's first and greatest need is an understanding heart, a heart that can understand its own problems and needs as well as the will of God. The greater the responsibilities man is called upon to bear, the greater his need of an understanding heart. One who is placed in a position of authority needs to understand the problems of others and how to solve them. In the administration of justice and the conduct of the affairs of state, he needs much of practical wisdom, keenness of insight, and clearness of judgment. One of Solomon's major functions would be the hearing of

difficult cases that would be referred to him by the lesser judges of the land. Standing at the head of the people of God, he sensed his great need of wisdom from God. No better understanding of the basic nature of wisdom is found anywhere than in the words written by him: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 9:10). "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding" (Prov. 4:7).

10. *Pleased the Lord.* God is pleased when man requests of Him that which is wise and good. It brings joy to the heart of God for man to relate himself wisely to the issues of life.

12. *Wise and an understanding heart.* Solomon's wisdom seems to have been both moral and intellectual. It was wisdom of a practical kind, concerning all departments of life, concerning the things and the hearts of men and the works and thoughts of the Creator.

13. *Hast not asked.* Here is God's own confirmation of the wisdom of Solomon's request. He modestly asked for wisdom, which would bring all the other blessings of life in its train. "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding" (Prov. 3:13). "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her" (Prov. 3:17, 18). "Whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul" (Prov. 8:35, 36). This is the great law underlying the divine government concerning which Jesus said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

15. *A dream.* Not simply a dream, but a dream from God. Solomon had every assurance that the dream was of divine inspiration, and that he had come in touch with God. So certain was he that this was the case that immediately upon his return to the capital, he went before the ark and offered sacrifices to God. The sequel shows beyond question that he was right, and that he had had a message direct from the Lord.

Before the ark. Solomon began his reign with a solemn religious ceremonial at each of the two holy places then in the land. The one was at Gibeon, where was the tabernacle of the congregation, and the other at Jerusalem before the ark, which some years before had been brought to the City of David (2 Sam. 6:12, 16).

Peace offerings. In addition to the religious ceremony of the sacrifice of burnt offerings, offered to the Lord as a sweet-smelling savor (Lev. 1:9, 13, 17) to signify an act of consecration to God, there was a large sacrifice of peace offerings, a joyous feast of communal fellowship in which the people were invited to participate in gladsome praise and thanksgiving for blessings received (see Lev. 7:12, 13, 15; 2 Sam. 6:18, 19; 1 Chron. 16:2, 3).

16. *Two women.* The case was one of no ordinary difficulty, or it would not have been brought to the king. The wisdom of Solomon was here to be put to a supreme test. Both disputants were of questionable character. The word of neither could be trusted. Their testimonies were evenly balanced, the stout affirmation of the one being met by the equally stout denial of the other. It seemed impossible to arrive at any certain or just decision. The whole court was in an atmosphere of suspense. Would the king have to admit that the matter was too difficult for him to handle? Inference, calculation, deduction, hypothesis—what were these but cumbersome weights to retard the wheels of justice in such a case as this? But Solomon cut across the cumbrous legal machinery of

the court and gave a swift and certain verdict, the justice of which was beyond dispute. The child was returned to its mother, justice had had its way, and Solomon's fame for wisdom and judgment was ensured for all time to come.

A mural from Pompeii now in the National Museum at Naples depicts what is thought to be the scene of Solomon judging between the two harlots.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 PK 53; FE 498
3–15Ed 48
4 PP 27
5 PK 75; 9T 281
5–11PK 28
7 PK 30, 47; 3T 449
7–159T 281
12 FE 414; ML 236; 3T 449
12–14PK 29
16–28PK 57
28 PK 32

CHAPTER 4

1 *Solomon's princes.* 7 *His twelve officers for provision.* 20, 24 *The peace and largeness of his kingdom.* 22 *His daily provision.* 26 *His stables.* 29 *His wisdom.*

1. King over all Israel. The emphasis here upon the word “all” suggests that the writer compiled his material after the disruption of the kingdom.

2. The princes. The list is that of the royal cabinet, the high counselors and officers of the state. They were not “princes” in the sense of being members of the royal family, but were officers of the first rank, deriving their station from Solomon, and holding it during his pleasure.

Azariah. It is significant that whereas in the lists of David's officers, the captain of the host stands first (2 Sam. 8:16–18; 2 Sam. 20:23–26), that officer in Solomon's list is preceded by those holding the peaceful offices of the priest, scribes, and recorder. The title “priest” seems properly to belong to Azariah, not to Zadok. The term “priest,” Heb. *kohen*, is sometimes thought to refer to a civil officer. In 2 Sam. 8:18, this title is given to the sons of David (translated “chief rulers”), whereas the parallel passage in 1 Chron. 18:17 has the explanation that these sons were “chief about the king.” In 1 Chron. 6:8–13, three Azariahs are listed in the line of descent: Ahitub, Zadok, Ahimaaz Azariah, Johanan, Azariah, Amariah, Ahitub, Zadok, Shallum, Hilkiyah, Azariah. The first Zadok, son of Ahitub, was high priest at the time of David (2 Sam. 8:17). According to Chronicles, Azariah was thus the grandson rather than the son of Zadok. Azariah, listed first among the “princes,” may have been one of the privy counselors of Solomon and later a high priest (see on 1 Chron. 6:8–13).

3. Sons of Shisha, scribes. In 2 Sam. 20:25, “Sheva,” and in 1 Chron. 18:16, “Shavsha,” is mentioned as the scribe of David. These names are probably variations of “Shisha,” and the scribes of Solomon may have inherited their office from their father. The “scribe” was one of the high officers of the realm, issuing the king's edicts, taking care of his correspondence, and probably also managing the royal purse (2 Kings 12:10).

The recorder. Jehoshaphat had filled this office under David (1 Chron. 18:15). The recorder was the court annalist, an officer whose duty it was to chronicle events as they

occurred, and whose work formed a part of the official archives of the realm. He was an important officer of the state (see 2 Kings 18:18, 37; 2 Chron. 34:8).

4. Zadok and Abiathar. See on 2 Sam. 8:17.

5. The king's friend. This seems to have been a recognized office in Solomon's time (see 2 Sam. 15:37; 16:16; 1 Chron. 27:33). In Egypt, to be the "friend" or "confidant" of the king placed a man in the enviable position of being a royal counselor.

6. Over the household. Director of the household, or steward. At the time of Hezekiah this office seems to have been one of great importance, above that of scribe, for when Shebna was to be demoted, the implication is that he was reduced from his position "over the house" to that of scribe (Isa. 22:15–25; 2 Kings 18:18).

The tribute. The marginal reading, "levy," is to be preferred. The reference is to the forced laborers employed by Solomon for his great public works (see ch. 5:13, 14). In the enumeration of David's officers in the early part of his reign, no such officer is found (2 Sam. 8:16–18); but it occurs in the list from the latter part of his reign (2 Sam. 20:24). The holder of this unpopular office was stoned to death in the insurrection against Rehoboam (1 Kings 12:18). Excavations at Ezion-geber provide clear evidence of the use of forced labor.

7. Provided victuals. This denotes the collection of revenue, either in money or in kind, for the maintenance of the court and the royal household. The office must have been one of importance, for in two cases (vs. 11, 15) the holders were married into the royal house. The districts over which the officers had jurisdiction were not in alignment with the twelve tribes, owing no doubt in part to the fact that by this time much of the early tribal division of the land had become obsolete. Their number, twelve, has no relationship to the twelve tribes, but to the twelve months of the year, in each of which one of the officers was responsible for supplying his quota of the royal dues.

8. Mount Ephraim. The higher part of the territory of Ephraim, one of the most fertile parts of Palestine, surrounding the city of Shechem.

9. Makaz. The towns here mentioned place the territory of the son of Dekar to the northwest of Judah, in the territory originally assigned to Dan (Joshua 19:40–43), but in the early history of Israel, held largely by the Philistines.

10. Socho (or Socoh). A place 10 1/4 mi. (16.3 km.) west-northwest of Samaria known as *esh-Shuweikeh*; not the city near which David fought Goliath (1 Sam. 17:1, 2), nor that southwest of Hebron (Joshua 15:48).

Hepher. A district of Judah, unknown.

11. Region of Dor. This district was along the coast, under Mt. Carmel, in the territory assigned to Manasseh. The king of Dor is mentioned in Joshua 11:2 as being aligned with Jabin in the confederacy of the north, and as subsequently conquered (Joshua 12:23), and his land given to Manasseh (Joshua 17:11). Abinadab, whose son had charge of this region, may have been David's elder brother (1 Sam. 16:8; 17:13).

12. To him pertained Taanach. This was an important division, including most of the plain of Esdraelon. It was one of the most fertile sections of Palestine. Because of its location, crossed by vital highways from north to south and east to west, it was protected by fortresses. Taanach, Megiddo, and Beth-shan were among the most important strongholds in all of Palestine, and were assigned to Manasseh. They were not conquered, but were under tribute when Israel was strong (Joshua 17:11–13; Judges 1:27, 28). The cities, though assigned to Manasseh, were within the territory of Issachar (Joshua 17:11).

Megiddo is the site of the death of Ahaziah (2 Kings 9:27) and of Josiah (2 Kings 23:29). Beth-shan is the fortress commanding the eastern approaches to the valley and is the city where the body of Saul was exposed in triumph (1 Sam. 31:8–10).

13. The towns of Jair. This was a large division in Transjordan, and included much of the territory of Manasseh and Gad. Ramoth-gilead was in the territory of Gad, and was one of the cities of refuge (Deut. 4:43; Joshua 20:8; 21:38).

Region of Argob. A territory once belonging to the kingdom of Og, but seized by Jair (Deut. 3:4, 13, 14).

Great cities with walls. This description is similar to that in Deut. 3:4, 5.

14. Mahanaim. This division was likewise in Transjordan, in the territory of Gad (Joshua 13:26; 21:38). It was the scene of Jacob's meeting with the angels on his return to Canaan (Gen. 32:2). It later became an important center, for it was the seat of Ish-bosheth's government (2 Sam. 2:8, 12, 29), and the place where David established himself on his flight from Absalom (2 Sam. 17:24, 27).

15. Naphtali. This was a northern district, in Galilee, south of Mt. Hermon, and included the northwest coast of the Sea of Galilee (Joshua 19:32–39). In it was Kedesh-naphtali, one of the cities of refuge (Joshua 19:37; 20:7; Judges 4:6).

16. In Asher and in Aloth. This division was in the north, along the Mediterranean coast (Joshua 19:24–31). The Asherites were not able to expel the Canaanites from their territory, but settled among them (Judges 1:31, 32).

17. Issachar. The territory of Issachar was south of Naphtali and north of Manasseh, and included the northern part of the plain of Esdraelon (Joshua 19:17–23). This district seems to have been to the north of the district mentioned in 1 Kings 4:12.

18. Benjamin. The territory of Benjamin was small but important. It included Jericho, Gibeah, Gibeon, Ramah, and originally Jerusalem itself (Joshua 18:11–28).

19. Gilead. A district east of Jordan, including parts of the territory of Reuben, Manasseh, and Gad (see on vs. 13, 14).

The only officer. The meaning of these words is not clear, since each district had no more than one officer. The LXX here reads, "one officer in the land of Judah." This may be the correct reading, for it will be noticed that otherwise the territory of Judah is omitted from the list of districts paying tribute to the royal court. As a special favor to Judah, there may have been one officer over that district who was over and above the twelve other officers. Since Judah was the home province, it was under no other government than that of the king's officers at Jerusalem; but it is hardly likely that for purposes of revenue Judah would have been excluded from the general system.

20. Were many. The description of the condition of the people here and in v. 25, as multiplied in numbers and living in a condition of prosperity and peace, is evidently designed to point to the fact that Israel had now reached a place where she was strong and secure, no longer at the mercy of troublesome neighbors, and able to take advantage of the land granted them.

21. Over all kingdoms. Solomon's empire consisted, in part, of a group of small, semi-independent vassal states that were ruled by their own kings but acknowledged the suzerainty of the Hebrew king and paid him an annual tribute. The fact that Israel's neighbors had now been destroyed or reduced to servitude is further emphasized in ch. 9:20, 21.

The river. The Euphrates (Gen. 15:18; Joshua 1:4). The writer is drawing attention to the fact that the kingdom of Solomon had reached an extent in accord with the promises made to Abraham, Moses, and Joshua. See The Empire of David and Solomon.

All the days. It was only during the lifetime of Solomon that this empire endured. States such as the one over which Solomon reigned, composed in part of a number of kingdoms loosely held together, often rose rapidly, and as rapidly fell to pieces.

22. Solomon's provision. The exact quantity of grain in a "measure," Heb. *kor*, is not known, but has been estimated at 50 gal. (6.24 bu.). Solomon's court has been estimated to have contained from 10,000 to 15,000 people.

24. Tiphseh. Generally taken to be a place on the Euphrates called Thapsacus by the Greeks.

Azzah. Gaza, at the extreme south of the Philistine plain.

He had peace. At least for the time being. Everything seemed under control, quiet within and no attacks from without. But lasting peace must rest upon a firmer foundation than that provided by Solomon's rule, as subsequent events were soon to show.

25. Under his vine. This phrase was common among the Hebrews (Micah 4:4; Zech. 3:10), and was also employed by the Assyrians (2 Kings 18:31). It is descriptive of an ideal period of peace and prosperity.

From Dan even to Beer-sheba. This phrase came into use during the judges period, and was employed from there on through the days of Samuel, Saul, David, and Solomon (see Judges 20:1; 1 Sam. 3:20; 2 Sam. 3:10; 17:11; 24:2, 15; 1 Chron. 21:2), to indicate a united nation that extended from the northern limit of Dan, to Beersheba in the extreme south. After Solomon's reign the term is not used again till Hezekiah issued his decree calling the people "from Beer-sheba even to Dan," to come to the Passover at Jerusalem (2 Chron. 30:5).

26. Forty thousand stalls. In 2 Chron. 9:25 the number is given as "four thousand." The difference may be explained as a copyist's error, the Hebrew words for "four" and "forty" being very similar. The multiplication of horses and horsemen—bidden to the future king in Deut. 17:16, but foretold by Samuel at Saul's inauguration (1 Sam. 8:11, 12)—is an indication of the growth of the empire by the use of military force. At the time of the conquest by Joshua, horses and chariots captured from the enemy were destroyed (Joshua 11:9).

27. Those officers. The officers mentioned in vs. 7–19. Some Greek translations place this verse after v. 19.

28. Barley. Barley was then, and still is, the common food of horses in the East. It was at times made into cakes or loaves (Judges 7:13; John 6:9). Wheat was the usual grain for human consumption.

Dromedaries. A more correct translation is, "swift beasts" (see margin). Probably swift horses, for the royal messenger service are here referred to (see on Esther 8:10).

29. Wisdom. In its fullest sense, especially as used in the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, wisdom is properly an attribute of God and is imparted by Him to man (James 1:5). Such wisdom has to do with character as well as the intellect. The word is used in a more restricted sense in vs. 30 and 31.

30. Children of the east country. The tribal people living between Palestine and Mesopotamia (see Gen. 29:1; Judges 6:3, 33; 7:12; 8:10). They are spoken of as dwelling in tents (Jer. 49:28, 29). Job was one of them (Job 1:3).

Wisdom of Egypt. The wisdom of Egypt was famous throughout the East. It included such fields as astronomy, medicine, architecture, mathematics, music, painting, embalming, and mystic philosophy. A wealth of the so-called wisdom literature of Egypt has survived.

31. Wiser than all men. Some of Solomon's rivals in wisdom are known only from this passage. Some think Heman and Ethan are the tabernacle musicians appointed by David (1 Chron. 6:33, 44), who may also be the Ezrahites in the titles of Ps. 88 and 89. A "Heman" is designated as "the king's seer in the words of God" (1 Chron. 25:5). However, the identity of these names is not definitely established.

32. Three thousand proverbs. His words of moral and practical wisdom, containing sound counsel, sage observations, exhortations to virtue, principles of holy living, and helpful precepts leading to godliness, happiness, and prosperity. Only a few of his proverbs have been preserved.

His songs. That Solomon was a writer of songs is known from the fact that some of them have been preserved, including the Song of Songs and possibly Ps. 72 and 127.

33. He spake of trees. The writings of Solomon reveal him to have had a deep appreciation for the beauties of nature. He was a keen observer, and undoubtedly made a habit of recording many of his observations for the benefit of those about him. None of these purely secular treatises of Solomon in the field of natural history have been preserved.

34. There came. It is only natural that Solomon's reputation for wisdom should be carried afar and that many would come to him from distant nations to share of his wisdom.

All kings. Not all kings in person, for many would send messengers; though some rulers, such as the queen of Sheba, would choose to come in person.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

21, 24, 25 PK 51
29–31PK 32; 2T 305
32, 33 PK 33
1

CHAPTER 5

1 *Hiram, sending to congratulate Solomon, is certified of his purpose to build the temple, and desired to furnish him with timber thereto. 7 Hiram, blessing God for Solomon, and requesting food for his family, furnisheth him with trees. 13 The number of Solomon's workmen and labourers.*

1. Hiram king of Tyre. In 2 Sam. 5:11 and 1 Chron. 14:1 Hiram is mentioned as having sent workmen and materials to David for the building of his house. Josephus cites Menander of Ephesus, who wrote, in Greek, a history of Tyre about 300 B.C., to the effect that Hiram was the son of Abibaal and that he reigned 34 years, dying at the age of 53, and being succeeded by his son Baleazar (*Against Apion* 1. 18). According to Josephus the Temple was built in the 11th (*Antiquities* viii. 3. 1) or the 12th (*Against Apion* 1. 18) year of Hiram. Since the founding of the Temple took place in the fourth year of

¹Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (1 Ki 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Solomon (1 Kings 6:1), the reign of Hiram must have overlapped that of David by some seven or eight years.

3. *An house.* After having given a general description of Solomon's government, the record proceeds with an account of the great undertaking of his reign, the building of the Temple. A parallel account of this important enterprise is found in 2 Chron. 2 to 4.

For the wars. It was not that David was so occupied with wars during his reign that he did not find time or opportunity to build the Temple, but that the Lord did not permit him to do this because of his having been so much a man of war (1 Chron. 22:8).

4. *Rest.* It was not the Lord's purpose that Israel should be in constant war against her neighbors. During the reign of David war was necessary for the establishment of the throne. But God had promised David a son who would be a "man of rest," and that He would "give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days" (1 Chron. 22:9). The name Solomon means "peaceable." Solomon recognized the fact that the rest he enjoyed had come to him as a blessing from God.

5. *I purpose to build.* David had purposed to build a house for God, but because God had not permitted him to carry out this noble purpose, he charged his son with this responsibility (1 Chron. 22:6–16). Solomon took upon himself this responsibility not only as a charge from his father but as a sacred commission from God. David's purpose became his purpose, and God's will his will. His first great business in life became that of building the Temple of the Lord.

The Lord spake. When David first proposed to build a house for the Lord, God sent a message through Nathan the prophet making plain to David that this work should be undertaken not by him but by his son (2 Sam. 7:2–17; 1 Chron. 17:1–15). God Speaks to men in various ways, but frequently a prophet is chosen as the channel of communication.

6. *Command thou.* There is given here in abbreviated form a portion of Solomon's message to Hiram, which is given much more fully in 2 Chron. 2:3–10. The request was not only for cedar trees but also for almug (2 Chron. 2:8) and fir trees (1 Kings 5:8, 10), and also for "a man cunning to work in gold," silver, brass, and iron (2 Chron. 2:7). In return for the timber, Solomon undertook to provide Hiram with provisions of wheat, barley, wine, and oil (2 Chron. 2:10; cf. 1 Kings 5:11). The specific purpose of the building of the Temple is presented in much fuller detail in 2 Chron. 2:4–6.

Cedar trees. The famous cedar of Lebanon was highly prized in antiquity. The Tyrians used it for masts for their ships (Eze. 27:5). Kings of Assyria and Babylon employed it for their temples and palaces. In Egypt cedar from Lebanon was used to a great extent. The forests of Lebanon were proverbial for their beauty and fragrance (Ps. 92:12; S. of Sol. 4:11; 5:15; Isa. 35:2; Eze. 31:3–9; Hosea 14:6, 7), watered by ever-flowing streams from snowy heights (S. of Sol. 4:15; Jer. 18:14; Eze. 31:4, 5, 7), while the rest of Palestine might be parched and dry. The modern cedar of Lebanon is usually from 50 to 80 ft. high and has a dome-shaped form. The leaves are produced in tufts, and the branches are long, spreading, and contorted. The famous cedars have largely disappeared from the Lebanon Mts. The tree still flourishes, however, in the Taurus Mts.

That can skill. The Phoenicians in general and the Sidonians in particular are mentioned frequently in ancient literature for their mechanical and artistic skills. They were especially noted for the work of cutting logs and transporting timber.

7. Rejoiced greatly. There seems to have been a genuine friendship between Hiram and Solomon, going back, no doubt, to the sincere friendship between Hiram and David. Hiram's answer to Solomon's request is given more fully in 2 Chron. 2:11–16.

Blessed be the Lord. This is an unusual response from a king of Tyre. Through his contacts with David and Solomon, Hiram had heard of the God of the Hebrews. The name of Jehovah at this time came to be honored by many of the neighbors of Israel, and the principles of His law and government came to be better understood. Barriers were broken down and conversions took place. There is no evidence, however, that Hiram himself became a worshiper of Jehovah or that his present answer gave evidence of a basic change in his religious beliefs. The words seem rather to be those of deference to the God of Israel, whom Hiram now acknowledged to have “made heaven and earth” (2 Chron. 2:12).

8. All thy desire. A more gracious response could not have been expected from anyone. Hiram entered fully into Solomon's plans and agreed to do all that was requested. What he did was done with a willing spirit and a happy heart. The tasks of earth would be much lighter if the same spirit were found more often in the hearts of those who are given opportunities to respond to requested favors.

9. From Lebanon. The logs were probably floated down the mountains or let down on slides. Thence they were transported to the sea and collected into floats or rafts and conveyed to Joppa (2 Chron. 2:16), 34 mi. (54.4 km.) from Jerusalem. In the building of the second Temple, the same course was followed (Ezra 3:7).

10. Hiram gave Solomon. There appears to have been a formal, written agreement between Solomon and Hiram (2 Chron. 2:11). Solomon set forth the terms of the contract, and they were promptly accepted by Hiram. Hiram agreed to deliver the timber desired by Solomon in harmony with the stipulations agreed upon. Josephus states that copies of the letters between Hiram and Solomon were still in existence in the days of Menander (c. 300 B.C.), and could be seen in the Tyrian archives (*Antiquities* viii. 5. 3).

11. Solomon gave Hiram. The arrangement entered into between Solomon and Hiram was mutually advantageous. Solomon needed timber of which he had little and Hiram had much. Hiram needed foodstuffs of which Phoenicia produced little and of which Israel may have had an oversupply. Both gave of what they had and received what they needed, and both were benefited as a result. Both were happy in this arrangement that promoted prosperity as well as peace.

Year by year. Solomon's building activities continued over a period of years, and arrangements were made whereby a specified amount of wheat and oil was turned over to Hiram year by year in exchange for continued supplies and the services of the Tyrian workmen.

12. Wisdom. Wisdom is needed in all the affairs of life, in religion as well as business, in government as well as agriculture, in the home as well as the school. Wisdom promotes contentment and prosperity, happiness and godliness. True wisdom comes from God and leads to God.

13. Raised a levy. This seems to have been the first time that the Israelites were called upon to perform forced labor. Samuel had foretold that with the coming of the kingdom this would be the case (1 Sam. 8:16). David had bound into forced service “the strangers that were in the land of Israel” (1 Chron. 22:2), but Israelites thus far had escaped such service. In connection with the building of the Temple, 30,000 laborers were drafted.

Supposing a population of 1,300,000 able-bodied Israelites (2 Sam. 24:9), this would be one out of 43.

14. A month. This arrangement of only one month of service in three must have made this system of forced labor much less obnoxious than would otherwise have been the case. This type of labor was not looked upon as bond service of the type that was levied upon strangers, for “of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen” (1 Kings 9:22). But it was nevertheless highly distasteful and was one of the chief causes of discontent at the close of Solomon’s reign (1 Kings 12:4).

Adoniram. One of the chief officers of the state (see on ch. 4:6).

15. Bare burdens. These laborers were not Israelites but strangers (2 Chron. 2:17, 18), such as were appointed by David to “hew wrought stones” (1 Chron. 22:2). They were true bond servants, or slaves, and gave continuous service in such fields of heavy labor as the bearing of burdens or the hewing of stones.

16. Solomon’s officers. The number is given here as 3,300, but a parallel passage gives 3,600 (2 Chron. 2:18). 1 Kings 9:23 gives the number of the “chief of the officers that were over Solomon’s work” as 550, whereas 2 Chronicles 8:10 gives the number of “the chief of king Solomon’s officers” as 250. It will be noticed that the total number of officers of all classes in each case is 3,850. It appears that the writers of Kings and Chronicles classified the officers differently. It is even possible that there was a reorganization, in which some were promoted, and that one writer gives the classification as it was before, and the other as it was after, the reorganization.

17. Great stones. These stones were large and carefully hewn. Much labor was spent in preparing them and transporting them from the quarry to the site of the Temple in Jerusalem. They may have been employed not so much for the foundation of the Temple itself as for the substructure of the Temple area, formed into a square on the irregular summit of Mt. Moriah. In this substructure vast stones are still to be seen, which until recently were thought to date from the age of Solomon, but are now known to go back no further than Herodian times. Some of these stones are 30 ft. long and 7 1/2 ft. high.

18. Stonesquarers. The correct reading is “Giblites,” as in the margin. They were the inhabitants of Gebal, or Byblos, (see Eze. 27:9), a coastal city of Phoenicia. It seems that they were skillful workers in stone and were employed any other experts for the performance of tasks requiring special skills.

CHAPTER 6

1 *The building of Solomon’s temple.* 5 *The chambers thereof.* 11 *God’s promise unto it.* 15 *The ceiling and adorning of it.* 23 *The cherubims.* 31 *The doors.* 36 *The court.* 37 *The time of building it.*

1. Four hundred and eightieth year. This verse synchronizes the 480th year from the Exodus with the 4th year of Solomon’s reign. This information is of prime importance, for upon it may be based the Hebrew chronological reckoning from Solomon back to Moses, and earlier. On the accuracy of the B.C. date assigned to the 4th year of Solomon depends the accuracy of all other dates based upon it. There is no evidence for taking 480 as a round number or as 12 generations, and none for making it cover the time of the judges by totaling the years of all the judges and omitting the years of oppression or foreign rule (p. 130). This commentary takes it as the actual 480th year (p. 131), counting the Exodus year as the first (just as Moses numbered the 40 years of wandering; see Vol. I, p. 187).

What was this 480th year, synchronized with Solomon's 4th year? By the chronological method outlined on pages 143–144 above, and by Assyrian synchronisms (p. 159), his 40th and last regnal year (ch. 11:42) can be dated 931/30 B.C. (This would be a Jewish civil year, fall to fall, beginning with the 7th month; see p. 116) Then his year 4 would be 967/66, in which the 2d month, Zif (later called Iyyar), fell in the spring of 966 B.C.

If, then, this 2d month in the 480th year was in 966 B.C., the 2d month in the 1st year of the 480 was 479 years earlier than 966—in 1445 B.C. This was the month after the Exodus (see Vol. I, p. 187; for the computation of 1445, see Vol. I, pp. 191, 192; Vol. II, pp. 134, 135). The Old Testament dates adopted for this commentary are based on synchronizing Zif in Solomon's 4th year—in the 480th year, inclusive, from the Exodus—with 966 B.C.

It should be noted that this chronological item, “in the four hundred and eightieth year,” is given formally and categorically, without any hesitation or reserve, and with unusual precision precession. Not only the year of Solomon and of the Exodus era, but also the month, is given. It is evidently meant to be an exact synchronism, such as 2 Kings 18:9, 10; Jer. 25:1; etc.

In the LXX the figure is given as 440 instead of 480, and in Josephus it is given variously as 592 or 612 (*Antiquities* viii. 3. 1; xx. 10 1); both the LXX and Josephus have numerous variations from the Hebrew numbers in Kings. But careful study of the figures of Josephus show them to be late and erroneous, and the numbers of the Hebrew text to be the earliest and the most reliable. Josephus is notorious for his conflicting and erroneous figures, and his numbers are not to be relied upon for the establishment of a sound chronology.

Month Zif. This is the early Hebrew name for the second month. After the Exile it was commonly called Iyyar. The rare and archaic names of the Hebrew months here and in v. 38 are evidence for the early date of the book.

Began to build. Solomon's decision to build the Temple was not an arbitrary, self-devised act, nor was it prompted solely through the wish and will of his father David. The motive that prompted Solomon was not personal ambition, the love of glory or pomp, but the carrying out of the purpose of Heaven. The hour had clearly come for the house of the Lord to be built, and Solomon gave himself whole-heartedly to the task. The period was one of rest and peace, both within the nation of Israel and among the nations round about. It was a time also of prosperity, enabling Solomon to secure the necessary materials. The people were able and willing to build.

The account of the building of Solomon's Temple is found also in 2 Chron. 3 and 4, but the record in Kings is the older and the more complete. The parallel account in 2 Chronicles agrees with it in all essential details. Although this account is significantly briefer than that in Kings, it contains some supplementary details.

In addition to the Biblical accounts, we have Josephus' description of Solomon's Temple (*Antiquities* viii. 3. 1–9). That account, however detailed, is not wholly trustworthy. Christian literature has nothing significant to add concerning the details of the Temple, nor, because of the thorough and repeated destruction Jerusalem has experienced since Solomon's time, has research made any notable contributions.

2. The length. A comparison of the specifications of the Temple with those of the tabernacle show that the Temple dimensions were proportionate to those of the

tabernacle, but with each dimension doubled. Thus the length of the Temple was 60 cu., twice the length of the tabernacle (Ex. 26:16, 18). If the length of the cubit is 17 1/2 in. (14.45 cm.) the building would be 87 1/2 ft. (26.7 m.) long, 29 ft. 2 in. (8.9 m.) wide, and 43 ft. 9 in. (13.3 m.) high.

The tabernacle in the wilderness was made in strict accord with the pattern shown to Moses "in the mount" (Ex. 25:9, 40). The Temple, being fashioned after that ancient structure, would conform to the original pattern. In addition, David passed on to Solomon minute directions for building the Temple as had been revealed to him by divine inspiration (PP 751).

3. The porch. At the front of the Temple was a porch 29 ft. 2 in. (8.9 m.) wide, the same width as the building, and 14 ft. 7 in. (4.5 m.) deep. The height is not given in Kings, but in 2 Chron. 3:4, it is 120 cu., or 175 ft. (53.4 m.). This height is not in accord with anything else known in ancient architecture, and would make a building of very unusual proportions and of rare appearance. Several of the manuscripts of the LXX and the Syriac read "20 cubits." The Hebrew generally repeats the word for "cubits" with each dimension. It will be noted that in 2 Chron. 3:4 the work is omitted. There is a similarity in the Hebrew between the word for "cubit," *'ammah*, and the word for "hundred," *me'ah*, and it is possible that the one was written for the other.

4. Windows of narrow lights. Hebrew scholars are still not clear concerning the exact meaning of this passage. Many believe windows with fixed lattices to be intended. Others believe the marginal reading to be correct, "windows broad within, and narrow without." Windows of such a type would externally be mere slits in the wall, but would open wide within, like the windows of ancient castles. The windows were placed high in the walls and above the chambers described in vs. 5–8.

5. He built chambers. Outside the Temple, on three of its sides, north, west, and south, was built a series of service chambers. These were entered from without the Temple itself and were so arranged as not to be considered to be a basic part of the Temple structure. In the entire description of these chambers description of these "chambers round about," the writer appears to employ meticulous care to indicate that these rooms were not structurally a part of the main building but were extraneous to it. Some of these chambers, at least, no doubt served as apartments for the priests and other Temple attendants.

Both of the temple. The side chambers ran the entire length of the building, abutting both upon the "temple," the holy place, in the forefront of the building, and the "oracle," the most holy place, at the rear of the building.

6. The middle. At the height of 5 cu. there was a recess of 1 cu. in the outside of the Temple wall. On the top of this step rested the beams for the floor of the second story. The result was that the second-story chambers were a cubit more in depth than those of the first.

The third. At the ceiling of the second story there was another recess of a cubit in the Temple wall, making the rooms of the third and uppermost story 7 cu., or 10 ft. 2 1/2 in. (3.1 m.).

Narrowed rests. The chambers were in three stories. In order to preserve the sanctity of the Temple and at the same time allow the attachment of the exterior chambers, the outside of the main Temple wall was constructed in a series of steps upon which rested the beams forming the roofs of the chambers and the floors of the upper stories. There

were three of these steps, each a cubit in depth. The Temple wall at the bottom was thus 3 cu. thicker than it was at the top. The outside wall of the service chambers was perpendicular, having no steps or rests. This arrangement resulted in the lowest series of chambers being the narrowest—5 cu. or 7 ft. 3 1/2 in. (2.2 m.). That was also their height (v. 10).

Not be fastened. With the arrangement of recessed walls just described, it would not be necessary for the beams supporting the floors of the outer chambers to pierce the Temple walls, but simply to lie upon the steps or “rests” provided by this type of construction. Thus there would be no basic union of these outside secular chambers with the sacred Temple itself.

7. Stone made ready. In order that the work of building might be carried on as noiselessly as possible, all stones were cut to size at the quarry, needing only to be fitted into their proper positions at the Temple site. This striking provision, involving much labor and care and demanding no little skill, was doubtless for the sake of reverence. Thus even in the construction of the Temple, due regard was had to the holy purpose it was intended to serve.

8. Middle chamber. Understood by some to mean the middle side chamber of the lower story. The LXX and the Targums read “lower chamber.” This seems to indicate that the entire lower story had only a single door, which was placed on the south side of the Temple. Whether this was in the middle or at the foremost apartment near the porch is not clear, but the latter is the more likely. There was no access to the Temple itself directly from the outer chambers.

Winding stairs. This is an unusual type of stairway, but archeological research has revealed a number of examples of such construction in the ancient East. The stairway seems to have been within the side structure, perhaps occupying the space that would otherwise have been taken by one of the chambers.

9. Finished it. This expression is repeated in v. 14 and a similar statement is made in v. 38. Verse 9 undoubtedly refers to the main part of the structure, the Temple itself, exclusive of the outside chamber, and the finishing spoken of is the completion of the shell with the roof. The internal fittings were added afterward (vs. 15–22).

Covered the house. That is, roofed it. Boards of cedar were placed upon beams of cedar. We are not told whether it was a flat or a sloping roof. Most commentators are of the opinion that it could only have been a flat roof such as is usual in the ancient Orient, but there are some who hold that it must have been a gable roof.

10. Built chambers. The main Temple structure seems to have been completed first, followed by the chambers built against the house.

Five cubits. Since there were 3 stories, each 5 cu. high, the total height of the outside chamber structure was 15 cu. Inasmuch as the Temple itself had a height of 20 cu. there was a space of 5 cu. above the chambers for the windows (v. 4). These windows provided light and ventilation for the Temple.

11. Word of the Lord. In the midst of the architectural description is inserted a brief notice of the Lord’s promise concerning the Temple. This message evidently came to Solomon while the work of building was in progress. How it came we are not told. At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream (ch. 3:5). After the Temple was completed the Lord again appeared to Solomon in the same manner, with a message of

warning and blessing (ch. 9:2–9). This message probably also came to Solomon in a dream, although a prophet may have been the instrument.

One of the reasons the Lord sent His word at this time was that Solomon needed to be kept in constant remembrance of his solemn responsibilities to Heaven. Even when a man is engaged in working for the Lord, and is acting upon His command and in fulfillment of His design, it is possible to forget the necessity of continued rededication of purpose. The danger is always present that he will take steps that will take steps that will forfeit the divine blessing. Again and again the Lord sends to His people messages destined to remind them of the vital importance of holding to basic principles which alone will ensure continued prosperity, peace, and blessing.

12. *If thou wilt walk.* The Lord's promises or warnings as to what He will do to His children are conditional (Jer. 18:7–10; 26:13). It could hardly be otherwise, since the basic laws of cause and effect are in constant operation in connection with all the works of man, whether good or evil. It is to man's own advantage to obey the laws of God, since those laws are established for the benefit of man and the world in which he lives. The commandments of God are never arbitrary decrees. They always point out a pathway of right and blessing. Disobedience to those commands inevitably brings woe and sorrow.

Righteousness is at the basis of man's peace, well-being, and prosperity (Prov. 11:5, 19; 12:28; Isa. 32:17, 18). It is a simple but inexorable fact that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23), and that "sin, when it is finished bringeth forth death" (James 1:15). That is why the prophets again and again set forth the principle that obedience to the commands of the Lord brings life and blessing and that disobedience brings disappointment and death (Ex. 15:26; Lev. 26:2–33; Deut. 28:1–68; Isa. 1:19, 20; Jer. 7:3–7; Dan. 9:10–14). Each generation and every nation needs to come to a clear understanding of the fact that the enjoyment of peace and blessing is contingent upon compliance with the fundamental laws of right and justice. Such are laws of God, the laws of life.

13. *Dwell among.* God has repeatedly indicated that He desires to be near His own (Ex. 29:45; Lev. 26:12; Isa. 41:10, 13). In the exercise of such fellowship the people of God find their greatest peace and their highest joy (Isa. 12:3–6; Zeph. 3:14, 15; Zech. 2:10). Man is basically a spiritual being who was so created that his soul needs and craves the presence of God (Ps. 42:1, 2, 5; 63:1, 8). Man was brought into being for fellowship with God, and only in such fellowship will he reach his fullest development and discover his highest joy. Nothing else will suffice to quiet the inner cravings of his heart and satisfy the hunger of his soul.

15. *Boards of cedar.* Cedar and cypress are frequently mentioned in the annals of the nations of the ancient East as fragrant and enduring, and as employed in the construction of their temples and palaces.

16. *The oracle.* That is, the most holy place, or the holy of holies, the innermost apartment of the Temple. The meaning is probably that, at a distance of 20 cu. in front of the rear wall, Solomon constructed a partition made of cedar boards, reaching from the floor to the ceiling.

17. *The temple.* This is the holy place, the important chamber of the Temple, where the priests ministered daily. This room was 40 cu. long.

18. *Knops.* The architectural ornaments were probably patterned after some species of ground. Another form of the same word is translated "gourds" (2 Kings 4:39).

19. The ark. The most important article in the Temple was the ark containing the tables of the law of the covenant (Ex. 34:1, 4, 10, 27, 28). According to the directions of Moses, it was placed “within the veil,” in the most holy place of the ancient tabernacle (Ex. 26:33). It was set in the corresponding place in the Temple of Solomon.

20. Twenty cubits. The most holy place was a perfect cube, 20 cu. long wide, and high, and its interior was entirely overlaid with the purest gold.

Covered the altar. The LXX in the final clause of this verse reads, “and he made an altar in front of the oracle, and covered it with gold.” This translation takes note of the fact that the altar of incense was in the holy place, before the veil separating it from the most holy place. (Ex. 30:6; 40:26).

22. He overlaid. He overlaid not only the interior of the holy place and the holy of holies with gold, but also the interior of the porch in front of the house (2 Chron. 3:4). The side chambers were not included, since they did not form part of “the house,” or the Temple proper.

23. Two cherubims. With respect to the cherubim, the pattern of the tabernacle again was followed (Ex. 37:6–9), but with some modifications. The original cherubim were entirely of gold. But those in Solomon’s Temple were much larger, and so were made of wood and then overlaid with gold. Their wings were stretched out to the full, so that the four wings, each 5 cu. long (v. 24), reached across the entire width of the Temple (v. 27).

31. Doors. These doors gave access from the holy place to the most holy.

A fifth part. The meaning seems to be that the lintel was one fifth of the width of the wall, and each doorpost was one fifth of the height of the wall. This would make the entire opening a square of 4 cu., or approximately 6 ft. (1.8 m.). Each door, therefore, would be about 6 by 3 ft. (1.8 by .9 m.).

32. Spread gold. At a later age Hezekiah “cut off the gold from the doors of the temple” and gave it to Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, who was then invading the land (2 Kings 18:16). From the earliest to the latest days of Assyrian history, the records tell of gates and doors of cedar covered chiefly with bronze, but also with silver and gold, and set up in temples or palaces. The famous Bronze Gates of Balawat, from the time of Shalmaneser III, are among the choicest treasures of the British Museum.

33. Door of the temple. This is the outside door that led from the porch into the holy place.

A fourth part. These doors were thus 5 cu. high, or about 7 ft. (2.2 m.).

34. Were folding. Each door seems to have been made in two parts, which folded back one on the other.

36. The inner court. This was probably the “higher court” of Jer. 36:10. The court of the ancient tabernacle was 50 by 100 cu. (Ex. 27:9–13, 18). Since all dimensions were doubled, it is probable that the court of Solomon’s Temple was 100 by 200 cu., or about 146 by 292 ft. (44.5 by 89 m.). No information is given on an outer court, but mention of an *inner* court presupposes an outer. In 2 Kings 21:5 and 23:12 mention is made of “two courts.” These two courts are described as “the court of the priests” and “the great court” (2 Chron. 4:9).

Three rows. Some have thought the meaning here to be that the floor of the court was made of three courses of stone, covered with planks of cedar, a raised platform thus being produced. Others believe that the reference is to an enclosing wall for the court, made of

three courses of stone and a coping of cedar. The latter is the more likely, since a wooden pavement for the floor of a court in constant use would hardly be suitable.

38. *The month Bul.* This was the early Hebrew name for the eighth month that began about the middle of October. Bul means rain, and hence probably signifies the month of rain. After the Exile it was called Marheshvan, later abbreviated to Heshvan. Such details as the month and year of Solomon's reign when the work on the Temple was begun and completed, and the use of such archaic words as the early Hebrew month names, constitute vital evidence of the authenticity of this document.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 GC 412

7 PK 35; 4T 258; 9T 180

17 GC 208

38 PK 35

CHAPTER 7

1 *The building of Solomon's house.* 2 *Of the house of Lebanon.* 6 *Of the porch of pillars.* 7 *Of the porch of judgment.* 8 *Of the house of Pharaoh's daughter.* 13 *Hiram's work of the two pillars.* 23 *Of the molten sea.* 27 *Of the ten bases.* 38 *Of the ten lavers,* 40 *and all the vessels.*

1. *His own house.* This section gives a brief description of Solomon's building activities in connection with his own palace. The word "house" as here used no doubt means not a single structure but the complex of buildings connected with the palace. There were many of these, the exact nature or purpose of which is largely a matter of conjecture. Undoubtedly they included most of the structures usually connected with a royal palace, such as halls of state, judgment halls, the royal residence, residence for the queen, armory, etc. These must have constituted a large group of buildings enclosed in a great court.

All structures of the time of Solomon were built on the two hills between the Kidron and Tyropoeon valleys—Mt. Moriah and Mt. Zion—in fact, there were no buildings west of the Tyropoeon Valley until the later kings.

Thirteen years. The 13 years are to be counted from the end of the 7 years when the Temple was completed, in Solomon's 11th year of reign (ch. 6:38). His whole period of building thus occupied 20 years (1 Kings 9:10; 2 Chron. 8:1), from the 4th year of his reign to the 24th. The building of the Temple took only seven years because it was a single structure, and a long period of preparation had preceded the actual building (1 Chron. 22:2–4). However, the palace complex consisted of a large range of buildings for which previous preparation could not have been made to any extent.

2. *House of the forest of Lebanon.* Since only meager information is available, much of what has been said by commentators concerning this house and the others mentioned in this chapter is largely conjecture. Some suppose that Solomon's own house (v. 1), the house of the forest of Lebanon (v. 2), and the house of Pharaoh's daughter (v. 8) were three entirely distinct and separate buildings, but others regard them as merely parts of a single structure. Not even the location is definitely known. It would seem more reasonable to conclude that there were three separate buildings situated near one another, and closely connected, and together constituting what is elsewhere termed "the king's house" (1 Kings 9:10).

Some believe “the house of the forest of Lebanon” was in the Lebanon Mts. But the name given to this structure, seems to indicate its nature rather than its location. Built as it was with four rows of cedar pillars, it would have the appearance of a cedar forest, and from that resemblance probably achieved its name. Because of the statement in Kings 10:16, 17, some conclude that the building served chiefly, if not altogether, as an armory, for Solomon placed in it “two hundred targets of beaten gold,” each target made of 600 golden shekels, together with “three hundred shields of beaten gold,” 3 lb. of gold going into each shield. But such “targets” and “shields” certainly were hardly for the purpose of war. It would be unusual to have soldiers venture into battle bearing shields of gold. Furthermore, arms are not usually stored in halls such as this. The building seems to have been a grand festal hall of a type often found in Mesopotamian palaces. The hall was large, 146 by 73 ft. (44.5 by 22.3 m.), yet it was not as large as some of the great Assyrian palace halls unearthed by modern excavation. Portions of the house may, however, have been used for the storage of arms, for Isa. 22:8 speaks of the “armour of the house of the forest.”

Of the four rows of cedar pillars, the first and the fourth were probably set as pilasters against the walls, thus providing for three great aisles down the length of the building.

4. *Windows in three rows.* Perhaps at the ends of each of the three aisles (see v. 3). If these were placed high on the walls, near the ceiling, a striking effect could be achieved by the rays of light coming in among the pillars like sunlight in a cedar forest.

6. *Porch of pillars.* This no doubt formed an entrance vestibule to the main hall of state. Its width was 50 cu., exactly the width of the main hall, and its depth, 30 cu. The height is not given, but it probably was the same as that of the main structure, 30 cu.

7. *Porch of judgment.* It is not clear whether this was a separate building, as some have held, or whether it was a chamber within the house of the forest of Lebanon. If the latter, it might have been at the opposite end of the front portico, with the clients of royal justice passing through the imposing entrance and the great hall to the cedar chamber, where the throne of the royal judge was appropriately placed.

8. *His house.* The palace of Solomon is only briefly mentioned. It may have been to the rear of the hall of judgment, within its own court. No details are given, except that it was of like workmanship to the structures already described.

12. *The great court.* The entire palace complex seems to have been enclosed within a large court, with probably smaller courts for the various public or private buildings. The walls were of three rows of stones, with a cedar coping, similar to the walls of the Temple court (ch. 6:36).

13. *Hiram.* According to the account of 2 Chron. 2:7–14, Solomon requested King Hiram to send him a skillful artificer in metalwork, in response to which Hiram sent a master workman who bore the same name as himself.

14. *Naphtali.* In 2 Chron. 2:14 we are told that Hiram was the son of a woman of Dan. This is correct, for he was a descendant on his mother’s side of Aholiab of the tribe of Dan, to whom, hundreds of years before, God had given special wisdom (PK 63). There is not necessarily a discrepancy, for there may have been an earlier marriage of the woman into the tribe of Naphtali.

15. *Two pillars.* Specifications concerning various parts of the pillars are given in a number of places, but not in sufficient detail to make the description entirely clear. The main shaft itself seems to have been 18 cu. (1 Kings 7:15; 2 Kings 25:17; Jer. 52:21),

with capitals consisting of several members of various sizes, some of 3 cu. (2 Kings 25:17), of 4 cu. (1 Kings 7:19), and 5 cu. (1 Kings 7:16, 2; 2 Chron. 3:15; Jer. 52:22). In 2 Chron. 3:15 the height is given as 35 cu., which some regard as the over-all height, including the various members of the capitals and perhaps the base as well. Others take it to be the length of the two pillars. This finds some support in the fact that in 2 Chron. 3:15 the Heb. *'orek*, "length," is used, whereas here *qomah*, "height," is used. The circumference of these pillars is given as 12 cu., which implies a diameter of 5 1/2 ft. (1.7 m.) In Jer. 52:21 we are told that they were hollow, and that the thickness of the brass was "four fingers."

It is not clear whether the pillars were primarily for use or for ornament. Some believe that they served as supports to the roof of the Temple porch. Others think that they stood by themselves, under or in front of the porch. It is not likely that the purpose was for the support of the roof, for supporting pillars of brass are not employed in buildings of stone, and the measurements do not accord with those of the Temple porch. On Phoenician coins, temples are often pictured with a tall independent pillar on either side. Several clay models of temples excavated in Syria exhibit this feature, as does an actual temple uncovered at *Tell Tainat* in northern Syria. Every indication is that Solomon's pillars were intended as works of art, and not as supports for the roof.

The names Jachin, "He shall establish," and Boaz, probably meaning "in him is strength" (v. 21), doubtless were meant to betoken a realization of the fact that the strength of Israel and all its institutions comes from God (Ps. 28:7, 8; 46:1, 2; 62:7, 8; 140:7; Isa. 45:24; 49:5; Jer. 16:19), and that it is He who establishes the kingdom and His people in righteousness and mercy (Deut. 28:9; 29:13; 2 Sam. 7:12, 13; 1 Kings 9:5; Ps. 89:4; 90:17; Prov. 16:12; 16:5; 54:14). It is significant that when Israel forsook God and righteousness, the nation destroyed itself (Hosea 13:9; 14:1). When Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem, Solomon's famous pillars were taken to Babylon (2 Kings 25:13; Jer. 52:17).

23. A molten sea. This was a gigantic laver, for the various washings of the priests, corresponding to the laver of brass in the tabernacle (Ex. 30:18–21; 38:8). It was about 14 ft. 7 in. (4.4 m.) in diameter and 7 ft. 3 1/2 in. (2.2 m.) high, and held 2,000 baths (v. 26), or about 11,620 gal. or 43,998 liters (see Vol. I, pp. 166, 167). This may refer to the quantity of water ordinarily carried, and a statement in 2 Chron. 4:5, giving the capacity as 3,000 baths, or 65,998 liters, may refer to the utmost that the laver could hold. Attempts to determine the volume of a "bath" on the basis of the measurements of the "molten sea" have been unsuccessful.

"Seas" are common objects in ancient temples, and were at times supplied with running water. In the case of Solomon's Temple the water was probably obtained from underground cisterns. The purpose of the sea was "for the priests to wash in" (2 Chron. 4:6). Bowls of considerable size are represented on Assyrian reliefs, but none bear comparison to Solomon's "sea." The largest bowls known from antiquity are greatly inferior to this great bronze laver in Solomon's Temple. It was no doubt a unique masterpiece.

25. Twelve oxen. The oxen were probably represented only in part, with their "hinder parts" suppressed under the curve of the bowl and only their fore parts visible. Bowls with artistic representations of animals are well known in the Orient.

The laver was placed on the southeastern side of the Temple (v. 39), near the great altar. It was near this position that the waters issued in Ezekiel's representation of the

Temple (Eze. 47:1). When Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem the brazen sea was broken in pieces and carried to Babylon (2 Kings 25:13; Jer. 52:17).

27. Ten bases. These were movable stands, each having four wheels of brass. Upon them were placed lavers in the form of chests of brass, 4 cu. across. An elaborate description is given of the decorations and fittings. In Cyprus and elsewhere ancient stands, similar to these, equipped with wheels, have been found.

40. Lavers. Some Hebrew manuscripts, the LXX and the Vulgate, here read “pots,” as in v. 45. Pots were the vessels used to boil the peace offerings (1 Sam. 2:13, 14). Each laver held 40 baths, which by the most recent estimates was about 232 gal. (879 liters). Earlier writers give estimates as high as 384 gal. (1,454 liters), which would weigh about 1 1/2 tons (6,614 kg.). The mobility of ancient wagons carrying such loads is difficult to comprehend. Five were stationed to the north of the Temple and five to the south, probably near the altar, for they served for the washing of such things as were “offered for the burnt offering” (2 Chron. 4:6).

Shovels. The “shovels” and “basons” were used in connection with the services at the altar (Ex. 27:3). No record is here given concerning the brazen altar, although in the account in Chronicles it is mentioned among the other things made by Hiram (2 Chron. 4:1).

46. Succoth. This site was on the east side of Jordan, in the territory of Gad (Gen. 33:17; Joshua 13:27; Judges 8:5).

47. Unweighed. So great was the quantity of the bronze used in the construction of the vessels that they were not weighed. This brass had been taken by David from the cities of Tibhath and Chun, cities of Hadarezer, king of Zobah, in Syria (1 Chron. 18:5–8). Vast amounts of bronze have been found in the ancient Near East.

Brass. More correctly “bronze,” or “copper.” Brass is made by combining zinc with copper in varying proportions. The extensive use of this alloy dates from comparatively recent times. The “brass” of Bible times was either pure copper or an alloy of copper and tin, or “bronze.”

48. Altar of gold. This was the altar of incense, which was placed before the veil (1 Kings 6:20, 22; Ex. 30:1–10).

Table of gold. The table of shewbread (see Ex. 25:23–28; 37:10–15). When David turned over to Solomon the materials he had gathered for the Temple, he gave him gold for the “tables of shewbread” (1 Chron. 28:16). According to 2 Chron. 4:8, 19, there were ten tables, five on the north side and five on the south side of the room. The ten tables were evidently at times referred to as one, as is indicated by the fact that Chronicles speaks of the table of shewbread not only in the plural, as above, but also in the singular (2 Chron. 13:11; 29:18).

49. The candlesticks. These ten candlesticks, five on the north side and five on the south side of the holy place, were probably in addition to the one seven-branched candlestick made for the tabernacle (Ex. 25:31–40; 37:17–24).

50. The bowls. Many of the articles here mentioned are also enumerated as among the items provided for the sanctuary (Ex. 25:29, 38). When Jerusalem fell to Nebuchadnezzar, these articles were carried off to Babylon (2 Kings 25:14, 15).

51. Had dedicated. David had accumulated an immense amount of silver and gold for the Temple and its furniture (1 Chron. 22:3–5, 14–16; 28:14–18; 29:2–5). Much booty taken in war was dedicated to the Lord and the Temple treasury (1 Chron. 18:7–11). Such

a treasury seems to have been in existence for some time, to which Samuel, Saul, Abner, and Joab, as well as David, had made their contributions (1 Chron. 26:26–28).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

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CHAPTER 8

1 *The feast of the dedication of the temple.* 12, 54 *Solomon's blessing.* 22 *Solomon's prayer.* 62 *His sacrifice of peace offerings.*

1. Solomon assembled. The account of the rites connected with the dedication of the Temple constitutes one of the outstanding chapters of the Bible. The narrative is one of great beauty and deep spiritual significance. In it leaders of the church have found words of inspiration and encouragement throughout the centuries for the consecration of houses of worship. This chapter stands in remarkable contrast with the preceding one. There we find the formal and technical details having to do with the material things of the Temple. Here we enter into the deeper significance of the things having to do with the house of God—we come into contact with God Himself. Both chapters have their part in giving us a true and complete picture of the Temple and its significance, and neither would be complete without the other.

Solomon is the important personage leading out in the various activities connected with the dedication of the Temple. His kingly majesty is conspicuous. But he seems to be more than a mere king, engaged only in the secular affairs of state. He is engaged now in a distinctly religious service for God. Such a service would not at all serve to lessen his royal dignity but to enhance it. He performs the functions that as king we would expect of him, and more. He calls together the leaders of the nation and directs in the arrangements made. But having done that, it might be expected that the priests would take over and lead out in the distinctly religious functions. But that is not the case. It is the king who consecrates the sanctuary, who offers the dedicatory prayer, who admonishes the people to be faithful to God, and who pronounces upon them the divine blessing.

Solomon provided exactly the type of spiritual leadership that God asks from those who are appointed to act as leaders in His work. Unfortunately this leadership continued but for a brief period. The one upon whose head rested such unequalled concentration of temporal and spiritual dignity before long fell victim to the temptation of self-idolatry. In a short time humility, devotion, and obedience gave way to pride, ambition, and indulgence, and gifts once employed for the glory of God were perverted to selfish purposes and worldly ambition, with the result that he who had been so highly honored with tokens of divine favor degenerated into an oppressive tyrant whose kingdom broke apart at his death. Israel, following his example, lost the secret of finding peace and riches on earth, and the once flourishing theocracy became a corrupt and desolate ruin.

Heads of the tribes. In the bringing up of the ark to Mt. Moriah, all the leaders of Israel were to have a part. There must have been a great concourse of people, elders, heads of tribes, and chiefs of the fathers, for at the time that David brought forth the ark of God “that dwelleth between the cherubims,” out of the house of Abinadab, to bring it to the City of David, the “chosen men of Israel” employed numbered 30,000 (2 Sam. 6:1–5).

The ark. Foremost among the services of dedication was the bringing up of the ark from the City of David to its new home in the most holy place of the Temple. The transfer of the ark by David from the house of Obed-edom to the tabernacle that he had

made for it in his own city, was an occasion of great joy as well as solemnity (2 Sam. 6:12–19). The ark containing the two tables of the law was the most important item in the sanctuary.

2. The month *Ethanim*. The month is given but not the year. Many believe that it was the year after the completion of the Temple. Since the Temple was completed in the month Bul, the 8th month (ch. 6:38), and since the dedication took place in Ethanim, the 7th month, this would be 11 months after the Temple was finished. Others hold that the dedication did not take place till some years later, perhaps a year of jubilee, or the 24th year of King Solomon's reign—13 years after the completion of the Temple (1 Kings 7:1).

After the Exile the 7th month was called Tishri, from the Akkadian or early Babylonian *Tashritu*, "beginning." The name implies a calendar beginning with this month. The civil year of the united monarchy and the kingdom of Judah began with Tishri. The first of that month was a day of holy convocation (Num. 29:1), the beginning of the new year. On the 10th day of that month was the solemn Day of Atonement when the cleansing of the sanctuary took place (Num. 29:7; Lev. 16:29, 30; 23:27), and on the 15th day began the Feast of Tabernacles (Num. 29:12; Lev. 23:34; Deut. 16:13; Neh. 8:14–18; Eze. 45:25). The beginning of this month corresponded approximately with the new moon of September or October.

3. The priests. In 2 Chron. 5:4 we are told that "the Levites took up the ark." All priests were Levites (Joshua 3:3), but not all the descendants of Levi were priests. The bearing of the ark on its journeys was properly the responsibility of the Levites of the family of Kohath (Num. 3:31; 4:15; 1 Chron. 15:2–15). But the Kohathites could bear the ark only after it had been prepared for its journey by Aaron and his sons (Num. 4:5, 15). At the passage of the Jordan and the circuit of Jericho it was the priests who bore the ark (Joshua 3:6–17; 6:6). On the occasion of the transfer of the ark to its permanent home in the holy of holies in Solomon's Temple, this important responsibility was probably committed to certain leaders among the priests (see 1 Chron. 15:11, 12).

4. The tabernacle. The tabernacle at this time was at Gibeon (1 Chron. 16:39, 40; 2 Chron. 1:3), but the ark was in Jerusalem, in a tent that David had pitched for it in "the city of David" (2 Sam. 6:2, 16, 17; 1 Chron. 15:1; 2 Chron. 1:4). Henceforth there was to be a single national center of worship, so the holy things from both the tabernacle at Gibeon and the tent from the City of David were brought to the Temple on Mt. Moriah, either to be used or deposited within its precincts (see PK 38). Probably each section of the priests and Levites now brought up in solemn procession the sacred things entrusted to it. According to the law of Moses, the Kohathites had charge of the ark, the table of shewbread, the candlestick, the altars, and the vessels of the sanctuary; the Gershonites, of the tabernacle itself and its hangings; and the Merarites, of the boards and pillars of the tabernacle and its court (Num. 3:25–37).

5. Sacrificing sheep. This inaugural sacrifice corresponded on a grand scale to the ceremonial on the occasion of David's transfer of the ark from the house of Obed-edom to the City of David (2 Sam. 6:13; 1 Chron. 15:26).

6. Into the oracle. The ark was brought into the most holy place, where, between the cherubim, was to be manifested the presence of God. This showed the sacredness of the law of God. The law is a transcript of the character of God. As God is holy, so are His commandments holy, just, and pure.

7. Covered the ark. Representing the reverence with which the heavenly host regard the law of God.

8. Drew out the staves. According to Ex. 25:15 the staves were not to be withdrawn from their rings in the ark. But now they appear to have been drawn forward in such a way that their ends could be seen from the holy place. The ark seems to have been placed crosswise of the Temple, that is, north and south in the most holy place, with not only the ark itself but also its staves overshadowed by the wings of the cherubim. In the tabernacle a veil made the partition between the holy and the most holy place (Ex. 26:31–33), and prevented the ark from being seen by those in the holy place. In the Temple there was apparently a separating wall (see on 1 Kings 6:16); there seems also to have been a veil (2 Chron. 3:14). It is known that Herod's Temple had a veil which, at the crucifixion, was rent in twain (Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45). The staves could have been placed in such a way as to be visible in part beyond the end of the veil, through the open door, to those within the holy place. See on ch. 6:31.

Unto this day. This is an indication that these words were written before the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar. When the compilation of the books of Kings was finally completed, the Temple had been destroyed and its furnishings carried away to Babylon (2 Kings 14:13, 14; 25:9, 13–17). Many items as now found in the records of Kings evidently were written before the Exile, and were allowed to stand in their original form when the compilation was completed.

9. Nothing in the ark. This statement, repeated in 2 Chron. 5:10, seems clearly to indicate that there was nothing in the ark itself except the two tables of stone. The items referred to in Heb. 9:4, the pot of manna and Aaron's rod, were originally commanded to be placed "before the Testimony" (Ex. 16:33, 34; Num. 17:2–10). Some have understood these words to refer to a position in front of the ark. However, the words may mean, before the tables of testimony *in* the ark (see EW 32). There need be no conflict between these statements for the treasures may have been removed during the troubled history of Israel, and not have been in the ark at this time.

There is something singularly impressive in this special hallowing of the two tables of the law. By being thus placed within the ark, directly above which God was to meet with His people (Ex. 25:22), the law is indissolubly bound together with God Himself. The most sacred place in the Temple was the holy of holies, and its most sacred item was the ark containing the law of God. As God by His very nature is holy and eternal, so likewise is His law. Everything that could possibly be done to impress upon His children the eternal sanctity of His law was done by God in the appointments of His holy Temple. This law, under the old covenant, was written upon two tables of stone; under the new covenant it is written upon the hearts of the righteous (Jer. 31:31–33).

10. Filled the house. This cloud of glory signified the divine presence as did the cloud that appeared on Sinai (Ex. 24:15–18) and again at the dedication of the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34–38). Ezekiel, in vision, beheld a similar glory over the house of God (Eze. 10:4). It was during a great lifting up of the voices of the assembled priests in an anthem of praise to God that His glory appeared in the form of a cloud (2 Chron. 5:13).

11. Could not stand. So great was the overpowering glory of God's presence that the officiating priests were forced temporarily to withdraw. So also when the tabernacle was first set up, Moses was not able to enter because of the glory of God which filled the sacred tent (Ex. 40:35). When Isaiah had his vision of God, the train of divine glory filled

the Temple, and Isaiah felt himself undone because of having come so near to the presence of the Lord (Isa. 6:1–5). The disciples of Jesus likewise trembled as the cloud of God’s glory overshadowed them on the mount of transfiguration (Luke 9:34). Why do men experience such reactions when in the presence of God? It is because of the very nature of God, His greatness and His holiness, His grandeur and sublimity, His majesty and might. Even in the presence of the great forces of nature men often stand in awe. But the God of heaven is so infinitely holy that sinful man cannot come into His sublime presence and continue to exist. God is like a consuming fire, which unholy men cannot approach without being destroyed.

The cloud in the Temple was not God, but it was a means by which the Lord veiled His presence to the end that man might not be consumed. So great was the divine glory on the occasion of the dedication of the Temple that in spite of the enveloping cloud, the ministering priests were forced to draw back in holy awe. Perhaps it was a similar consciousness of the divine presence that drew forth from David his words of wonder and praise when the ark was brought into the tent of the Lord (1 Chron. 16:25, 27, 34).

12. *Then spake Solomon.* Solomon was deeply impressed with the sublime manifestations of the nearness and the greatness of God. His words are broken and abrupt, as coming from a man deeply moved. He speaks with feelings of mingled awe and joy. These are not words that he had earlier carefully prepared, they are words of wonderment and praise that burst forth spontaneously as a result of the spectacle he has just seen.

Thick darkness. Witnessing the combined darkness and glory before him, the mingled shadow and light, Solomon was assured that the Lord was there (Eze. 48:35). His thoughts went out to those previous occasions when like phenomena had been witnessed—when the Lord’s presence had been manifested on Sinai in a thick cloud (Ex. 19:9), and the cloud of glory filled the tabernacle in the wilderness (Ex. 40:34, 35)—and as a result he was able to recognize in the appearance of the cloud the sign that the divine presence had been granted to the Temple he had built. So his first words were in explanation of the phenomenon then being witnessed. This is evidence of the very presence of God; He is with us; we have nothing to fear, but we have everything to be thankful for on this glorious occasion.

13. *An house to dwell in.* The Temple was built as a house of God. When the tabernacle was first constructed in the wilderness God had said, “Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” (Ex. 25:8). That sanctuary had been constructed, and in it the Lord had manifested His presence and had communicated with His people.

A settled place. Israel had its sanctuary, but the sanctuary had no settled place. The tabernacle was moved from one place to another in the wilderness. Even in the Promised Land it had no settled place. For 300 years it had been at Shiloh, till sin had caused it again to be moved, first to Nob (1 Sam. 21:1–6; PP 656), and later to Gibeon (1 Chron. 16:39, 40; 2 Chron. 1:3). Now at length the Temple had been completed, and at last the ark of God would have a settled place, a place for God to abide throughout the ages. It was God’s purpose to be with His people forever, and had Israel remained true to Him, this glorious building would have stood forever (PK 46). How great must have been the joy of Solomon as he looked back over the years of preparation and building that had cost

so much anxiety and thought, to realize that his task had been accomplished and that the house where God was to make His abode with His people, had been completed.

14. Turned his face about. According to the book of Chronicles Solomon had made a brazen scaffold 3 cu. high, which stood in the midst of the court, before the altar (2 Chron. 6:12, 13), and it was from there that he addressed the people. Up till this moment, Solomon had been solemnly looking upon the Temple filled with the glory of the Lord. His thoughts had been primarily of God, and his words were addressed to God. Now he turned from the Temple and addressed the vast concourse of people before him.

Israel stood. The people stood in an attitude of attention and respect, and no doubt shared in the gladness and solemnity of the occasion, and were eager to receive the gracious benediction of the king.

15. Blessed be the Lord. Solomon is blessing the people, but his first thoughts again are of God, who alone is the source of all blessing. With heart filled with joy and gratitude, and with a spirit of deep emotion, he makes mention of what God had done for his father David, conveying to David His purpose concerning the Temple. It was through the prophet Nathan that God had revealed to David the fact that not he but his son Solomon was to build the house of the Lord (2 Sam. 7:4–13).

16. I chose David. The choice of God is not one of blind preference or prejudice, but of wisdom and love. As God chose Israel from among the nations, as He chose Jerusalem from among the numerous cities of Israel, so He chose David for purposes of blessing and salvation to all people. When God chose David for purposes of blessing and salvation to all people. When God chose David He looked not at outward appearances but at the heart (1 Sam. 16:7).

17. Heart of David. David's desire and purpose were the honor and the glory of God. So it was in his heart to build a house for the Lord. What a different world this would be if men were more concerned about building houses for God than for themselves, about building up the kingdom of God rather than the kingdoms of men. It was in the heart of David that there should be a house for God, and as a result the Temple was built. Stately temples have humble and modest beginnings in the hearts of men.

18. Thou didst well. David's purpose was good, even though it was not entirely in accord with the will of God. It was God's will that a temple be built, but because David had been a man of war, it was not the Lord's wish that David should be the builder (1 Chron. 22:7, 8; 1 Chron. 28:3).

19. Thou shalt not build. God expressed His approval of David's purpose, but nevertheless He directed that the work David desired to do should be done by another. Occasions frequently arise in which men have in their hearts a worthy purpose to do some work for God, but because of certain reasons not always clearly understood, perhaps because of inadequacies in experience, capabilities, or training, the Lord in His wisdom directs that the work be done by others. David's submission to the divine will demonstrated both his wisdom and the depth of his religious experience.

20. Performed his word. It was God's will that Solomon rather than David should build the house of the Lord, and His purpose was carried out. Man can make his own lot and that of others unpleasant by stubbornly setting himself against the will of God. It is cooperation with God that brings the greatest progress in the work of God. Solomon, in building the Temple in harmony with the divine will, was placing himself in the channel

of heavenly blessing. It was then that the Lord performed His word. Solomon was the instrument, but God was the moving power.

21. *The covenant.* The Ten Commandments are here called “the covenant,” because they formed the basis of the covenant between God and His people. The covenant was the plan whereby the holy principles revealed in the law were to be reproduced in man. Thus by a figure of speech the law is called the covenant. From the earliest days of man it has been God’s desire to write His holy law in human hearts.

22. *Solomon stood.* The narrative in Chronicles is more complete. It is true that during his dedicatory address Solomon stood (2 Chron. 6:12), but now having completed that address, he “kneeled down upon his knees” (2 Chron. 6:13) for the dedicatory prayer.

24. *Hast kept.* In beginning his prayer, Solomon gives thanks and praise to God for having fulfilled His promise to David in regard to a successor upon the throne and the building of the Temple and implores Him to continue the promise with regard to an unbroken succession.

27. *Will God indeed dwell?* The sanctuary was built as the dwelling place of God. David, upon moving the ark, made acknowledgment of the fact that God had chosen Zion and had “desired it for his habitation,” promising that He would make it His “rest for ever,” and that there He would dwell (Ps. 132:13, 14). But when Solomon contemplated the greatness and the grandeur of God, the One who inhabiteth eternity, who had “measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance” (Isa. 40:12), it seemed incomprehensible that such a God would take up His abode on earth, in such a house as Solomon had made. The thought here expressed illustrates a constant contrast that runs through the entire Bible. On the one hand there is a most profound and unvarying conception of the infinity of God, eternal, invisible, incomprehensible, of the Lord high and holy, the great “King of kings, and Lord of lords” (Rev. 19:16). On the other hand, there is an equally vivid conception that the infinite Jehovah is a God who is very near at hand, who is a friend of man and a personal companion to all; one who walks and talks with men and dwells in earthly sanctuaries made for His holy abode. It will never cease to be a source of wonderment that One so mighty and so transcendently great should condescend to take recognition of mortal man and come to dwell in sanctuaries of mere wood and stone, and within the human heart.

28. *Have thou respect.* The words flow from a heart deeply stirred with feelings of mingled awe and humility. Man is totally unworthy to have as a companion the Creator of all the universe. A temple on earth does not deserve the presence of the Holy One on high, who “stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in” (Isa. 40:22). Unworthy though man may be, unworthy though the Temple may be, Solomon prays that God may still take cognizance of this structure on earth, by night and day, and from heaven, His true dwelling place, give ear to the earnest prayers of men.

30. *Forgive.* Solomon recognized that every man who sends a prayer heavenward stands in need of forgiveness. This sense of guilt and of the need of Heaven’s forgiveness is found all through the earnest prayer offered by Solomon in behalf of himself and his people (vs. 34, 36, 39, 50). Solomon knew that forgiveness of sin would be the earnest desire of those who prayed. He also knew that man’s hope of receiving an answer to his petitions would rest largely on the sin-pardoning grace of God.

31. Against his neighbour. This is the first of a series of prayers for particular cases, seven in all, in which God's forgiving mercy is invoked. The first case involves individual trespass of a man against his neighbor.

32. Condemning the wicked. Solomon here appeals to God to allow the works of iniquity and the ways of righteousness to bring forth their just results in the lives of those concerned. More than many realize, both good and evil bear fruit in this world, each according to its kind. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). "Righteousness keepeth him that is upright," "but wickedness overthroweth the sinner" (Prov. 13:6; see also Prov. 14:34; Prov. 11:5, 19). When Israel fell it could be justly said, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself," "for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity" (Hosea 13:9; Hosea 14:1).

33. Israel be smitten. Before the nation of Israel was established, the Lord foretold exactly what the result of transgression would be. The people would be smitten before their enemies (Lev. 26:14, 17; Deut. 28:15, 25). The protecting grace of Heaven would be withdrawn, and their enemies would be permitted to lay them low.

Turn again. Chastisement often brings repentance, for it is when God's "judgments are in the earth," that "the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9). Solomon does not pray for the Lord's forgiving mercies upon those who persist in rebellion and sin, but only upon those who recognize their transgressions and return to Him. To all such, forgiveness is sure (1 John 1:9).

35. Shut up. When God withdraws His protecting hand, the forces of nature often become agents of judgment. Solomon assumed that in the future the judgment of drought threatened by Moses (Lev. 26:19; Deut. 28:23, 24) would become a reality.

37. Famine. The calamities listed were distinctly threatened in the Mosaic code (Lev. 26:16, 20, 25; Deut. 28:22, 35, 38, 42). It is when men forsake the ways of righteousness that such judgments are multiplied, and when they are witnessed through the length and breadth of the land, the world may know that the restraining hand of the Lord is being withdrawn.

38. Plague. For every man to know the "plague of his own heart" is for him to recognize his sinfulness and the part that it has had in bringing about the woes that are making the land desolate. The plague in the land has its origin in the plague of the heart. It is the plague of sin that is the true plague, the basic cause of all other plagues. Unless the evils of sin are recognized, and unless sin is put away, there is no hope of dealing with the many other ills that are plaguing the world and threatening to reduce it to a desolate ruin.

39. Thou knowest. Only God really knows the heart. Many men have little or no understanding of the evils of their own hearts, and the ills they are bringing upon themselves and the world about them as a result of the sin that is lurking there. God knows the heart, and He knows how to change the heart, how to create for man a "clean heart," and to "renew a right spirit" within him (Ps. 51:10).

41. Concerning a stranger. This section is a striking and happy digression in the series of references to Israel. Men from far and strange countries would come to honor and worship the Lord.

42. They shall hear. Jehovah was the God not only of Israel but of all the world. It was His plan that Israel should make known His name throughout the world, so that men

everywhere might hear of His goodness and grace and join themselves with Israel in worship.

43. *Do according to all.* How different was the spirit of Solomon on this occasion from that which actuated the Hebrew people in succeeding years! God's covenant was to include, not only one nation, but all. His grace was not for the Hebrews only but for all who were willing to acknowledge Him. When the Temple was first established, Solomon remembered the strangers of other lands, that they too might hear of God's covenant of grace and come to the Temple to worship Him. Israel was to be a light that was to enlighten the world. Had they been faithful to their divine mission, the nation would not have perished, but would have continued to grow till it embraced all the nations of earth, till Jerusalem would have become the world's metropolis, and its Temple would have become the source of a river of life to bring health and healing to all (Zech. 14:8).

46. *If they sin.* This is Solomon's closing petition. With almost prophetic insight, his thoughts go out toward some future day when, because of sin, Israel would be forsaken by the Lord and fall into enemy hands, to be carried to an alien land. Such a possibility Moses had clearly foretold (Deut. 28:45, 49–52, 63, 64).

That sinneth not. Knowing the weaknesses of the flesh, knowing that there is no man that sinneth not no nation that sinneth not, there rose before Solomon the grave possibility that Israel might sin so grievously against the Lord that His presence would be withdrawn from them and they would fall into enemy hands. He prayed most earnestly that God would remember His own at such a tragic hour. How short the interval between glory and the grave! The Temple completed, the Temple destroyed! A day of glory, a day of doom! Solomon, raising his voice in earnest petition to God that this house should be the dwelling place of the Lord forever, even at the hour of dedication understood well the tragic results that sin must bring. Accordingly, in his prayer we find this strange mingling of joy and sorrow, of glory and ashes, of honor and shame. Seldom has a prayer been offered for a people with hopes so high, seldom has a prayer gone out for men with spirits so humble, as at this hour of dedication of the Temple of God. It was a prayer of promise and prophecy, of visions of divine glory and the baseness of sinful man.

47. *Bethink themselves.* In the hour of deepest tragedy there is always hope. No matter how low Israel might be brought as a result of sin, if they would only bethink themselves and acknowledge their error and perversity, and choose the better way, they would yet find grace with God.

48. *Toward their land.* When Daniel prayed in Babylon, he knelt before his windows open toward Jerusalem (Dan. 6:10).

50. *Forgive thy people.* This prayer of Solomon, offered three and a half centuries before the Exile, is very similar to the prayer of Daniel at the time the captivity in Babylon was drawing to its close (Dan. 9:2–19). As the Temple was being dedicated there seemed little need for such a prayer as this. But with inspired foresight, Solomon envisioned an hour when that splendid Temple would lie in ruins, when the Land of Promise would be a land of bitterness and distress, and the children of Israel would be outcasts in an alien land. There is a touching pathos in the fact that at the hour of Israel's greatest glory, Solomon prayed the same kind of prayer that Daniel prayed at the hour of his nation's greatest shame. Both prayers were needed and both were heard. The first was not only a prayer, it was also a message of warning that would help to avert the doom that transgression would bring. The other would rise to a God in heaven who waited only for

a genuine repentance on the part of His people before permitting their return from captivity.

51. *They be thy people.* The reason for Israel's existence as a separate people was that the Lord had chosen them from among the nations and had established them in the Promised Land (Ex. 19:4–6; Deut. 9:29; 2 Sam. 7:23; Ps. 135:4). Since Israel belonged to God, they had the assurance that He would love them and help them, that His right hand would uphold them, and that in the hour of greatest distress they would have no occasion for fear (Deut. 33:26, 27; Isa. 41:8–14; Isa. 43:1–6). Since the happiness and well-being of His children was God's greatest concern, His children felt that they had the right, in pressing their petitions, to plead with Him not to forsake His own. However, this alone would not guarantee their success. The promises of God are conditional, and those who expect the blessing must meet the conditions.

Out of Egypt. The deliverance from Egypt was history. The fact that God had brought Israel out of the iron furnace of Egypt could never be changed. In that fact Solomon found a powerful argument for another deliverance should Israel again find itself crushed under the heel of a foreign lord. When Jeremiah later compared the deliverance from Babylonian captivity with that from Egypt, he declared that, in view of the greater restoration to come, Israel would no longer say, "The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt," but, "The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north" (Jer. 16:14, 15; 23:7, 8).

The Empire of David and Solomon

2

²Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (1 Ki 5:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.



The boundaries of Israel here shown indicate its narrower limits (see 1 Kings 8:65). During part of the region of David lands extending to the Euphrates, while not incorporated into the kingdom, were also tributary to him (see on 2 Sam. 8:3).

³

53. Thine inheritance. This is the final and strongest reason Solomon finds it possible to present why God should remember His people Israel. They are the Lord's inheritance on the basis of His own repeated claims and His oft-repeated promises. Through Moses the Lord revealed that He would make Israel His own peculiar people, chosen out of all the peoples of earth (Ex. 19:5, 6; Deut. 14:2). They were to be known as "a people of inheritance" (Deut. 4:20; cf. 9:26, 29). For the Lord now to reject them would be to place in jeopardy the honor of His holy name (Ex. 32:12, 13; Num. 14:13, 14). Earnest pleas were raised to God at times of extremity that the Lord would deliver Israel for the honor of His name (Ps. 79:9, 10), and for the sake of the city and the people called by His name (Dan. 9:19). At the time of Ezekiel the Lord declared that it was because of His "name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen" (Eze. 20:9, 14; cf. 20:22) that He had wrought so mightily in delivering Israel from Egypt.

54. Made an end. Solomon had prayed a most striking and a most touching prayer. It included not only Israel but the strangers afar; it was for the individual as well as the nation, for generations as yet unborn as well as those then in the Temple courts, for the

³Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Ge 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

faithful in the cause of the Lord and also for those whose feet might be led astray. Indeed, the most striking feature of the entire prayer is its deep and genuine concern for those who would find themselves standing in the greatest need of divine grace, those who might sin against the Lord and would need to be reclaimed. Such a prayer could come only from a heart of compassion and love, a heart warmed by the pity and mercy of God. There were in these words of Solomon no effort at rhetorical effects, no attempt at display, no desire to set forth words that would receive the acclaim of men but fail to reach the ear of God. This prayer was genuine; it came from the lips of a man of God. When it was ended, the Lord manifested His approval by a second unusual display of power and splendor—fire descending from heaven to consume the sacrifice and fill the Temple with glory (2 Chron. 7:1–3).

55. *Blessed all the congregation.* The pronouncement of this formal benediction was a distinctly religious act. To Aaron and his sons had been given the special duty and privilege of pronouncing the divine blessing (Num. 6:23–26). The fact that Solomon now pronounced these final words of blessings shows the great importance he placed upon things of the spirit. As king he interested himself not only in the usual affairs of state but in the spiritual welfare of his subjects.

56. *Hath not failed.* Similar words were spoken by Joshua (Joshua 21:45; 23:14). God never fails. He has made many promises to His people, and He is faithful in carrying them out (Heb. 10:23). If men fail to receive the blessings that the Lord has promised to give them, it is because of failure on the part of man. The Lord had promised to give to Abraham and his seed the land of Palestine for an eternal inheritance (Gen. 12:7; Gen. 13:15; Gen. 17:8), but the descendants of Abraham after the flesh forfeited that inheritance because of their transgressions against the Lord (2 Kings 17:7–23; Jer. 7:3–15; Jer. 25:4–9).

57. *God be with us.* As a God of love, the Lord desires to be with His people. The Temple was built that He might dwell among them (Ex. 25:8; 1 Kings 6:12, 13). Jesus came to the world as Immanuel, “God with us” (Matt. 1:23), and when He departed, His promise was that He would be with His people “always, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:20). In the heart of every true child of God there is no higher desire, no deeper longing, than to realize the presence of God (Ps. 42:1, 2; Rev. 22:20, 21).

58. *Incline our hearts.* The desire to follow in the ways of the Lord and to keep His commandments is a divinely implanted impulse. God’s Holy Spirit is constantly at work, guiding men into pathways of truth and obedience. The closer a man draws to the Lord, the more fully he forsakes the sinful things of earth, and the more ready he is to do all that God requires. The Spirit of God leads men to obey and inclines them to keep the commands of the law, but it does not do this against man’s will. When men are willing to obey they become inclined to obey. The closer a man draws to the Lord, the more fully do God’s thoughts become his thoughts, and God’s ways his ways. When man comes to the Lord with humbleness of spirit and willingness of heart, desirous of learning His ways and of walking therein (Ps. 119:26, 27, 30, 32–36), he begins to find obedience to God to be a matter of pleasure rather than duty and the law of God to be a law of liberty (Ps. 119:45, 47, 97; James 1:25; James 2:12), rather than a yoke.

60. *All the people.* This is the great purpose of God, and this is the purpose that should be uppermost in the heart of every child of the kingdom, that all the people of earth might come to know the Lord and share fellowship and service.

61. Be perfect. The Scriptures make clear that perfection of character is prerequisite to entrance into the kingdom of heaven. The standard of perfection is found in those principles of righteousness and love set forth in the commandments of God (Matt. 19:16–21; Luke 10:25–28; Deut. 5:2–22, 29–33; 6:3–5). The gospel, revealed in types in the OT and in full clarity in the NT, shows how we may obtain the perfection of which Solomon spoke.

63. Solomon offered. In offering these sacrifices Solomon was not at this time performing the functions of a priest; he made his offering in the same sense as anyone might who brought his sacrifice before the Lord (Lev. 2:1; 3:7, 12). The sacrifices here mentioned are identified as peace offerings. In such offerings only a portion of the sacrifice was burnt upon the altar as a “sweet savour unto the Lord” (Lev. 3:3–5, 14–17). The remaining part was eaten by the offerer and his family or friends (Lev. 7:15–21). This offering was not an atoning sacrifice but an offering of thanksgiving rendered to God in grateful and joyous recognition of blessings received. It was a happy and festive occasion in which large numbers of people might participate (2 Sam. 6:18, 19; 1 Chron. 16:2, 3). The number of animals sacrificed at the dedication of the Temple was extraordinarily large, but it must be remembered that a vast concourse of people were present, having gathered together from “all Israel, ... a great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt,” and that they were there for a period of 14 days (1 Kings 8:65).

64. The brasen altar. No mention is made in Kings of the construction of this altar, but it is referred to in 2 Chron. 4:1. This altar was very large, being about 34 ft. long, 34 ft. wide, and 17 ft. high. But because of the very large number of offerings, it was inadequate for this occasion. To meet the situation, the priests consecrated the entire “middle of the court,” to serve as a huge altar, on any part of which sacrifices of various kinds might be offered (see 2 Chron. 7:7).

65. A feast. The feast was held for 14 days, and on the 23d day of the 7th month the people were dismissed (2 Chron. 7:10). Thus it began on the 10th day of the 7th month, which was the solemn Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:29, 30; 23:27; Num. 29:7). It was in this month that the Feast of Tabernacles was held, beginning on the 15th day of the month and continuing for 7 days (Lev. 23:34, 39). During this time the people were to dwell in booths made of branches of trees (Lev. 23:34, 40–42).

The entering in of Hamath. Hamath marks the extreme northern limit of the Holy Land (see Num. 13:21; Num. 34:8; Joshua 13:5; Judges 3:3; 2 Kings 14:25; 1 Chron. 13:5; Amos 6:14). For the identity of “the entering in of Hamath,” see on Num. 34:8 and Joshua 13:5. The great valley between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mts., known to the Greeks as Coele-Syria, marks the main entrance to Palestine from the north. Down this valley invading armies entered Palestine from the north.

River of Egypt. The word used here for “river” is not the usual Hebrew word *nahar*, but *nachal*. That is, a stream or torrent, which may be dried up in the dry season, as in Job 6:15, where the word is translated “brooks.” The stream was probably the *Wadi el-‘Arîsh*, at the extreme southern limit of Palestine (Num. 34:5; Joshua 15:4, Joshua 15:47; 2 Kings 24:7; Isa. 27:12), 50 mi. southwest of Gaza (see The Empire of David and Solomon).

66. Tents. A Hebrew expression that came to be used for “home” (Joshua 22:4, 6–8; Judges 7:8; Judges 20:8; 1 Sam. 4:10; 13:2; 2 Sam. 18:17; 20:1; 1 Kings 12:16).

Joyful. True religion is a thing of joy. The man who has made his peace with God has in his heart a spirit of true happiness and quiet contentment that others can never know. The dedicatory services of the Temple had been a source of inspiration and joy to the participants. In fellowship with each other, in singing praises to God and recalling His blessings, in giving to Him the honor and glory due His holy name, they had found a fullness of peace and joy that no pleasures of the world can ever bring. When a man has rendered unto God that which is of God, he can go about his daily labors with peace and gladness of heart. These worshipers were happy, we are told, not only for the goodness that the Lord had shown to them, but for His goodness to David and Solomon also (2 Chron. 7:10). Well for the land where ruler and people wish blessings for each other and rejoice in each other’s prosperity and joy, where they make intercession for each other, and work for each other’s welfare and peace (see Ps. 85:9–12).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–66PK 37–50, 65, 66; SR 193, 194

4–7SR 193

10, 11 SR 194

29 PK 66

33, 34 PK 335, 359

42, 43 PK 66

54 SR 194

56 ML 337

59, 60 PK 359

60 PK 66

61 PK 58; 7T 218

CHAPTER 9

1 *God’s covenant in a vision with Solomon.* 10 *The mutual presents of Solomon and Hiram.* 15 *In Solomon’s works the Gentiles were his bondmen, the Israelites honourable servants.* 24 *Pharaoh’s daughter removeth to her house.* 25 *Solomon’s yearly solemn sacrifices.* 26 *His navy fetcheth gold from Ophir.*

1. When Solomon had finished. Work on the Temple was begun in Solomon’s 4th year (ch. 6:1), and was completed 7 years later, in his 11th year (ch. 6:38). The building of the palace took another 13 years (ch. 7:1). Thus Solomon’s combined building program of Temple and palace took 20 years (ch. 9:10; 2 Chron. 8:1), being completed in the 24th year of his reign. A question arises concerning the exact meaning of the words, “when Solomon had finished.” Does this mean that it was not till the end of the 20-year period of building that the Lord appeared to Solomon with the message that his prayer offered at the dedication of the Temple had been heard? If so, then when was the Temple dedicated; shortly after its completion, or after a wait of 13 years, till the entire building program had been completed? If the Temple was dedicated shortly after its completion, would the Lord wait 13 years before telling Solomon that his prayer had been answered? Or could it be that the dedication did not take place till 13 years after the completion of the Temple? These are questions that, because of the brevity of the narrative, we are not able to answer with absolute certainty. It appears, however, that the response to the prayer of Solomon came shortly after the utterance of that prayer (see PK 45).

2. *The second time.* God had first appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, given at Gibeon early in his reign (ch. 3:4–15). Again he was given a night vision (PK 45), but this message presents a contrast to the message of the earlier vision. Then the predominant theme was one of promise and encouragement (chs. 3:12–14; 6:12, 13); now again there were promises and encouragement, but there were also solemn warnings of the sad results that transgression would bring.

3. *I have heard.* Solomon was given the assurance that his words of earnest entreaty had been heard. He had done everything within his power to encourage the people to be faithful to the Lord and His commands. God honored his spirit and his purpose, and now gave him a new assurance of divine favor. How often the Lord gives His children renewed expressions of confidence, fresh appearances from on high, commendations for the services of earlier days, and promises of favor and blessing for days to come

I have hallowed. God alone can sanctify. His presence makes things holy. The Temple was holy because God was there. Outwardly it had the same appearance as a structure of wood and stone built by the hands of men, a place of splendor and beauty, but now it was sanctified, a sacred house adorned with the unseen presence of a holy God. Holy things are only spiritually perceived. Calloused men with hardened hearts may see no difference between the sacred and the profane. The holy Sabbath, the Word of God, the house of worship, may appear to them no different from the usual things of earth. Heaven may be very near, but they discern it not. The emphasis that is placed in this vision on “this house, which thou hast built,” “this place,” suggests that the vision was given in the sacred precincts of the Temple, even as the site of the first vision was the “great high place” at Gibeon, where Solomon had gone to sacrifice (ch. 3:4).

For ever. It was not God’s purpose that the Temple at Jerusalem should ever be destroyed. Had the Temple remained holy, it would have stood forever. If Israel had continued faithful to the Lord, His name and His presence would have been there forever, as a witness to all the world that Israel was the chosen of the Lord, His “peculiar treasure” ... “above all people” (Ex. 19:5; see PK 46). As to the meaning of “for ever,” see on Ex. 12:14.

4. *If thou wilt walk.* All God’s promises of blessing are conditional upon obedience. It could not be otherwise. The laws of nature as well as those governing moral conduct are the laws of God, and whoever violates those laws sins against himself. All God’s laws are given for the benefit of man and for the world in which he lives. When these laws are violated the inevitable result is sorrow, sickness, pain, woe, and death. This is true for the individual as well as the nation, for the community as well as the world. The pathway of obedience is the only pathway of peace and prosperity, of life and health. The well-being of society, the peace of the nation, the hope of the world—all require that men learn the wisdom and practical worth of obedience to every command of God. When Israel still was prosperous and Solomon still was young, God desired to make it plain that transgression would not bring joy but sorrow, not blessing but disaster and death.

5. *Israel for ever.* God did not choose the children of Israel for the purpose of later casting them off. He did not choose David with the purpose of later rejecting his house. Every choice of God is a wise choice, and has behind it basic reasons that prove it good. It was His plan that the throne of David and the nation of Israel should be established forever. In spite of the failure of the descendants of David and of Israel after the flesh,

God's purpose will yet be accomplished through spiritual Israel (Rom. 2:28, 29; 4:16; Gal. 3:29) and through Jesus the Son of David (Micah 5:2; Acts 2:34–36; Rom. 1:3).

6. Will not keep. The man who does not keep the commandments of God turns his back on God. "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments" (1 John 5:3). The true children of God keep the commandments of God, not because they are forced to, but because they desire to; not from fear of God, but from love of God.

7. Cut off Israel. God is holy, and sin cannot abide in His presence. When men sin they cut themselves off from God, and from life and blessing. Repeatedly through His prophets the Lord warned Israel of the tragic consequences of transgression, and His solemn warnings seem to have been multiplied in the closing days of Israel's and Judah's history, when transgression brought the people face to face with doom (Isa. 1:19–24, 28; Jer. 7:9–15; Eze. 20:7–24; Dan. 9:9–17; Hosea 4:1–9; Amos 2:4–6; 4:1–12; Micah 1:3–5; Zeph. 3:1–8).

A proverb. See Deut. 28:37. The misery and reproach that have been the lot of Israel for centuries are a tragic fulfillment of this warning.

8. High. Heb. *'elyon*, "highest," "most high," probably in the sense of being conspicuous as an example. The Syriac and the Arabic read *le 'iyin*, "ruins."

9. Who brought forth. God's gracious deliverance from the land of Egypt should have provided the strongest possible motive to keep Israel faithful. It is almost inconceivable how a people could be so ungrateful toward a God who had done so much for them. The ingratitude of Israel and their folly in forsaking such a God and turning to the worship of idols were to be recognized by the world as a just cause for the judgments of God to fall upon this people.

10. Twenty years. These 20 years begin with the 4th year of Solomon (ch. 6:1), when he began to build the Temple. They include the 7 years employed in the work on the Temple (ch. 6:38) and the 13 years during which his own house was built (ch. 7:1).

11. Gold. The gold that Hiram gave to Solomon may not have been provided at the time the Temple was built, but was probably the 120 talents mentioned in v. 14. After 20 years of building, Solomon's treasury was doubtless considerably depleted, and as a result Solomon turned to Hiram, who may have agreed to provide the gold in return for certain cities from Solomon.

Solomon gave Hiram. These cities are not mentioned in the compact made between Solomon and Hiram, whereby Hiram was to furnish timber and labor for activities connected with the building of the Temple, and was to receive in return certain provisions of food (1 Kings 5:5–11). Nor is anything said in the original agreement about Hiram's providing Solomon with gold. According to the strict provisions of the Mosaic code, Solomon had no right to give away these cities (Lev. 25:23). But such are the necessities of a worldly policy that technical provisions of the law are easily set aside.

Galilee. The name "Galilee," means "circle," and refers to the district twice mentioned in the book of Joshua in which the city of Kedesh was situated (Joshua 20:7; 21:32). The region was to the northwest of the Sea of Galilee. The western portion of this territory would be near the frontiers of Tyre, and so would suit the purposes of both Hiram and Solomon. It appears that at the time the compact was made, these cities were populated by native inhabitants of the land rather than Israelites, for it was 20 years after

the return of these cities to Solomon that men of Israel were caused by their king to dwell there (2 Chron. 8:2).

12. *Pleased him not.* Hiram probably had cast his eyes on the bay of Accho, or on some rich grain lands, and was disappointed when he received a group of inferior inland towns. It seems that Hiram refused Solomon's gift, and never even took possession of the cities.

13. *Land of Cabul.* A city Cabul 9 mi. southeast of Acre is mentioned in Joshua 19:27, in the territory of Asher. But the territory of Cabul was in Galilee in the territory of Naphtali. Hiram, by a play on words, signified his discontent with Solomon's gift. The exact derivation and meaning of the word "Cabul" is not known. Josephus states that the interpretation of the word according to the Phoenician language is, "what does not please" (*Antiquities* viii. 5. 3). The word may be based on the Aramaic root *kbl*, "be barren." A rabbinic tradition endeavors to explain the name as from a root meaning "fettered" or "chained."

14. *Sixscore talents of gold.* Solomon's yearly income was 666 talents of gold (ch. 10:14). Thus the sum received from Hiram would be about one sixth of Solomon's annual income. It is impossible to fix the exact monetary value of the talent. An estimate (Vol. I, p. 167) would make the weight of the talent approximately 34.2 kg., or 75.4 lb.

15. *Levy.* The rest of this chapter consists of brief historical and explanatory notes, but it contains some items of great value. The levy here referred to was mentioned in ch. 5:13, 14. This labor draft was first for the building of the Temple and then for the palace and other enterprises.

Millo. Thought to be a citadel, terrace, or fortification in Jerusalem. Since David dwelt in the "fort," or "castle," of the old Jebusite city captured by him, later known as the "city of David" (2 Sam. 5:7, 9, 1 Chron. 11:5, 7), Millo was probably a strong place in the city when it was taken by David. It was probably situated at the northern end of the city. David (2 Sam. 5:9; 1 Chron. 11:8) and Solomon (1 Kings 9:24; 11:27) added to the early fortification, and later Hezekiah did additional work (2 Chron. 32:5). Others have explained Millo to be the earth filling along the eastern slope south of Moriah.

The wall of Jerusalem. David greatly strengthened and extended the walls of the ancient Jebusite city, building "round about from Millo and inward" (2 Sam. 5:9). Solomon made further repairs and additions, closing up certain weak points of defense in the City of David (1 Kings 11:27).

Later kings continued to make repairs and additions, till the wall eventually ran near the Valley of Hinnom at the south (Jer. 19:2), including a double wall at the southeast near the king's garden (2 Kings 25:4), a wall outside the City of David on the east, "on the west side of Gihon, in the valley" and which went "about Ophel" and was raised to "a very great height" (2 Chron. 33:14). The gate at the northwest corner was an important gate called the "gate of the corner" (Jer. 31:38). It was a section of this northern wall, "from the gate of Ephraim unto the corner gate, four hundred cubits" (2 Kings 14:13), that was broken down by Jehoash of Israel during the reign of Amaziah. Uzziah repaired and strengthened the wall, building towers at the "the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning of the wall, and fortified them" (2 Chron. 26:9).

Hazor. This was an important city in the north, on high ground, near the former Lake Huleh. It had been the city of Jabin, head of the northern confederacy (Joshua 11:1). After Joshua's great victory over this confederacy, he burnt the city (Joshua 11:13), and

later signed it to Naphtali (Joshua 19:36). In view of the city's importance, commanding a vital invasion route from the north, Hazor was fortified by Solomon. In the days of Pekah it was captured by Tiglath-pileser III (2 Kings 15:29).

Megiddo. This was an important stronghold in the southern part of the plain of Esdraelon. It commanded a pass between the plains of Sharon and Esdraelon. The city was assigned to Manasseh, but was not subdued at the time of the division of the land (Joshua 17:11–13). It is mentioned in the account of the battle between the kings of Canaan and Deborah and Barak (Judges 5:19). It was to Megiddo that Ahaziah fled when he was smitten by Jehu, and it was there that he died (2 Kings 9:27). It was also at Megiddo that the death of Josiah took place, as he endeavored to stop the forces of Necho of Egypt on his way north to the Euphrates (2 Kings 23:29). Megiddo has been thoroughly excavated. Among the ruins unearthed are stone stables, cement floored, for nearly 500 horses. These were at first assigned to Solomon's time, but are now believed to be those of Ahab.

Gezer. This was an important Canaanite town, on a bastion extending out into the maritime plain, 6 1/4 mi. (10 km.) west-northwest of Aijalon, on the boundary of Ephraim (Joshua 16:3). The city was assigned to the Levites (Joshua 21:21), but was not taken at the time of the conquest (Judges 1:29), although it was tributary for a time (Joshua 16:10). It occupied a strategic position in the plain of Aijalon, an important pass, frequently used by the Philistines making their way to the central highlands. It is mentioned on a number of occasions in connection with the battles of David (2 Sam. 5:25; 1 Chron. 14:16; 20:4).

16. For a present. Gezer was taken by Pharaoh and given as a dowry on the occasion of the marriage of his daughter to Solomon. There are a number of records of grants of important territorial rights as dowries on the occasion of royal weddings in the ancient East.

17. Gezer. This city has been carefully excavated, and the Biblical record of its destruction and rebuilding about 1000 B.C. has been definitely confirmed. An interesting discovery was a rock-cut tunnel leading down through the rock to a spring in a cave 94 ft. (28.7 m.) below the surface of the rock and 120 ft. (36.6 m.) below the present ground level. Of note also are the city's massive fortifications including towers, which were later added to the early walls, possibly by Solomon.

Beth-horon the nether. There were two towns by the name of Beth-horon, both situated in a mountain pass between the Valley of Aijalon and Gibeon on the central highlands. The lower town is about 12 mi. (19.2 km.) northwest of Jerusalem. A mile and three quarters (2.8 km.) to the east, at an elevation of 735 ft. (225 m.) above the lower town, is Beth-horon Upper. Both towns were fortified by Solomon (2 Chron. 8:5). After smiting the Amorites at Gibeon, Joshua pursued them down this pass (Joshua 10:10, 11). It was up this pass that the Philistines ascended to make war with Saul (1 Sam. 13:18), and it was also up this pass that General Allenby made his approach against the Turks in the first world war.

18. Baalath. This town is not certainly identified. It is grouped with the towns of Aijalon and Ekron at the edge of the maritime plain, in the territory originally assigned to Dan (Joshua 19:42–44). Josephus places it near Gezer (*Antiquities* viii. 6. 1).

Tadmor. Heb. *Tamor*, but in a parallel passage, *Tadmor* (2 Chron. 8:4). There is considerable uncertainty as to which city is meant. Some have identified it with Tamar, a

city mentioned by Ezekiel as at the southern border of the new land of Israel (Eze. 47:19; 48:28). The exact location of this city is not known, but it is thought to have been to the south of the Dead Sea. On the other hand, there is another city by the name of Tadmor about 131.7 mi. (210.7 km.) northeast of Damascus and about 112 mi. (179.2 km.) west of the Euphrates in an oasis in the Syrian Desert. This city is mentioned a number of times in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser I as in the land of *Amurru* (Syria). Many years later Tadmor came under the control of the Romans, who called it by its Greek name, Palmyra, and it is this city that Josephus regards as the “Tadmor in the wilderness,” which Solomon built (*Antiquities* viii. 6. 11). The Hebrew word *tamar* means “palm tree,” a meaning preserved in the later name of Palmyra.

Scholars on the whole do not think it possible for the kingdom of Solomon to have had such extensive frontiers. But in connection with the building of “Tadmor in the wilderness,” Chronicles reports that Solomon went against “Hamath-zobah, and prevailed against it” (2 Chron. 8:3, 4). This place has been thought to be an area about 60 mi. north of Damascus and 100 mi. west of Tadmor-Palmyra, and its mention would indicate a campaign in which this entire northern area was brought under Israelite control. In 1 Kings 4:24 the northern limit of Solomon’s kingdom is given as Tiphseh, a city believed to be on the Euphrates, about 100 mi. north of Tadmor. All this seems to indicate that the kingdom of Solomon was much larger than has usually been admitted, and that the “Tadmor in the wilderness” (1 Kings 9:18) may well have been the famous Tadmor-Palmyra in the Syrian Desert.

In the land. A phrase is probably added to indicate with pride that this frontier city was within the limits of Solomon’s extensive domain.

19. *Desired to build.* In the pride of his ambition and prosperity Solomon engaged in very extensive building enterprises. A description of some of his ambitious projects is given in Eccl. 2:4–10, which included houses, gardens, orchards, pools of water—“whatsoever mine eyes desired.” Anxious to surpass the glorious achievements of all nations about him, Solomon’s ambition carried him into enterprises that were against the purposes of Heaven and the best interests of the state. The heavy burdens placed upon the people soon became intolerable and led to discontent, bitterness, and ultimate revolt.

21. *A tribute of bondservice.* An exaction of forced labor in the interests of Solomon’s extensive building enterprises. Shortly after the conquest some of the inhabitants of the land had been put under tribute, which, however, continued only while Israel was strong (Judges 1:28). David had placed many of the native inhabitants under forced labor (1 Chron. 22:2).

22. *No bondmen.* This exemption granted to the children of Israel from the type of bondservice imposed upon the native inhabitants did not free them from certain types of forced labor. Solomon raised a levy of 30,000 men “out of all Israel” (ch. 5:13, 14). Although efforts were put forth to make this service as acceptable as possible, it still produced such strong resentment that it was one of the main grievances against the throne at the time of Solomon’s death (ch. 12:4), and resulted in the stoning of Adoram, who had been placed in charge of the levy (ch. 12:18).

Men of war. On the whole, however, the endeavor was made to treat the children of Israel as a superior and dominant race. They were chosen to be the king’s warriors and courtiers, directors in the various enterprises, and commanders of his chariots and horsemen. But as the absolute power of the king increased, he degenerated more and

more into an oppressive and unfeeling despot; his favorites became arrogant and conceited, and the condition of those less favored probably differed from serfdom more in name than in reality. As a result, dissatisfaction became deep and widespread.

23. Chief of the officers. Inasmuch as Solomon had 3,300 officers (see on ch. 5:16), the 550 officers here mentioned must have been of a higher rank. In 2 Chron. 8:10 the number of the “chief of king Solomon’s officers” is given as 250 while the total number of “overseers” is 3,600 (2 Chron. 2:18). Kings and Chronicles are thus in agreement as to the total number of officers, but differ as to the number in each of the two ranks.

24. Unto her house. In 2 Chron. 8:11 a reason is given for this removal: “Because the places are holy, whereunto the ark of the Lord hath come.” Since the ark had been brought into the City of David (2 Sam. 6:12), Solomon evidently regarded the entire area as sacred and not suitable for the house of his foreign wife. It has been suggested that the new royal quarters were probably on the hill west of the Temple area, with the Tyropoeon Valley between them.

25. Three times in a year. The Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles (2 Chron. 8:13), the three important annual feasts that all Hebrew males had to attend in Jerusalem (Ex. 23:14–17; Deut. 16:16).

Did Solomon offer. Some have assumed that this verse provides evidence that Solomon officiated as priest three times in each year in offering sacrifices and burning incense. But there is nothing in the Bible to justify this view. The man who brought a sacrifice is said to offer it (Lev. 2:1; 3:1, 3, 7, 9, 14). In connection with sacrifices after the dedication of the Temple, it is added that “the priests waited on their offices” (2 Chron. 7:5, 6). At such ceremonies Solomon probably went no further than any of the common people in the offering of incense or sacrifice, permitting the priests to perform such functions as were exclusively theirs (Lev. 1:7, 8, 11; 2:2, 9, 16; 3:11, 16; 10:1, 2; Num. 16:1–7, 17–40; etc.).

26. Ezion-geber. This place is at the head of the Gulf of Aqabah, a seaport of Edom on an arm of the Arabian Gulf. The Israelites camped near here on their journeys through the wilderness (Num. 33:35; Deut. 2:8). The site, now 500 yds. from the sea, was either Ezion-geber or a suburb and commercial center connected with it. A building formerly identified as a smelter, but now as a fortified storehouse, was excavated; and various artifacts of copper were found elsewhere on the site (see on Deut. 8:9). Solomon apparently controlled the overland trade route from Palestine to Arabia and the sea route to Ophir. The ambition to control these routes was probably one of the major causes of the struggles between Israel and Edom. Saul fought against Edom (1 Sam. 14:47), and David placed garrisons there (2 Sam. 8:14; 1 Chron. 18:13). “Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken at Ezion-geber” (1 Kings 22:48). In the days of Jehoram, Edom revolted from Judah and was under its own king (2 Kings 8:20). Amaziah fought a successful war against Edom (2 Kings 14:7), and his son Azariah “built Elath, and restored it to Judah” (2 Kings 14:22).

Eloth. Sometimes written Elath. A place on the Gulf of Aqabah near Ezion-geber. The name survives in Eilat, the modern city near this place.

27. Hiram sent. The Hebrews were not a seafaring people; hence Solomon made use of Phoenician sailors, much as the Egyptians employed seamen from Byblos in their various commercial enterprises in the Red Sea area.

28. Ophir. The identification of Ophir with Punt is now virtually certain. Punt was probably located in what is now known as Somaliland, on the northeastern coast of Africa. In addition to gold the products obtained from there were almug trees and precious stones (ch. 10:11), and possibly also silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks (ch. 10:22). There is a record of the Egyptian queen Hatshepsut sending an expedition to Punt to bring back myrrh trees for her temple. The ships of the Egyptian queen also brought back from there ebony, ivory, gold, cinnamonwood, panther skins, monkeys, and baboons.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 PK 75
15–19PK 71
16 PK 53
26, 28 FE 501; PK 72

CHAPTER 10

1 *The queen of Sheba admireth the wisdom of Solomon.* 14 *Solomon's gold.* 16 *His targets.* 18 *The throne of ivory.* 21 *His vessels.* 24 *His presents.* 26 *His chariots and horse.* 28 *His tribute.*

1. The queen of Sheba. There has been considerable difference of opinion as to the country over which this queen ruled. Both Arabia and Ethiopia have claims to such a name and such a queen. The expression “queen of the south,” applied to the queen of Sheba in Matt. 12:42, would apply equally well to a queen of either Arabia or Ethiopia. Results of recent archeological researches in southern Arabia tend to identify the queen with this territory and her capital with Marib, in Yemen. The Arabian Sheba was a great spice country, and many are inclined to believe that this was the Sheba whose queen made a visit to Solomon (see Vol. I, pp. 131, 275).

2 Spices. The spices of Arabia have long been famous. In Eze. 27:22 Sheba is mentioned as trading with Tyre in spices, precious stones, and gold.

3. All her questions. Doubtless questions that had to do with diversified fields of learning. To these questions Solomon gave helpful, intelligent answers, which directed the queen's mind to the true source of his wisdom and prosperity.

5. Ascent. Heb. *'olah*, generally translated “burnt offering,” which would make good sense here. The queen may have witnessed one of these sacrifices in which a prodigious number of animals were used. If the translation “ascent” is to be retained, the reference has been thought by some to be a causeway leading from the lower city to the Temple area.

9. Blessed be the Lord. After the queen of Sheba had witnessed Solomon's wisdom and works, she answered, not in words that showed a mere formal appreciation for the hospitality that had been accorded her, but in words that revealed that her heart had been deeply moved. In her response she touched but lightly on all the external magnificence and evidence of worldly prosperity and placed the main emphasis on extolling the God of Solomon, who had given him his wisdom and prosperity, and his fame, which had gone throughout the world. Instead of extolling the human agent she had rightfully been led to give glory to God. Her visit may have led to her conversion. There is reason to believe that the queen will be among the saved in the kingdom of God (Matt. 12:24). God intended that many such conversions should result from Israel playing her role among the peoples of earth. From here and there throughout the nations, men were to go to Israel

and there become acquainted with Israel's God. By such means light was to go out among all nations.

10. *She gave.* What the queen of Sheba gave to Solomon in the way of material things was small recompense for what she received in the way of spiritual things. She gave gold, precious stones, and fragrant spices, but received in return heavenly treasures beyond the value of men.

11. *Gold from Ophir.* Chapter 9:28 mentions the bringing of gold from Ophir, to be followed in ch. 10:1–10 by the account of the visit of the queen of Sheba. Now v. 11 again speaks of the gold of Ophir. There is probably some significance in this arrangement. The same sequence prevails in 2 Chron. 8:18; 2 Chron. 9:1–10. There seems to be some connection between the gold of Ophir brought by the servants of Hiram and Solomon and the gold brought by the queen of Sheba. It was probably Solomon's Ophir trade that brought news to the queen of the wisdom and wealth of Israel's king that resulted in her visit to Jerusalem.

12. *Almug trees.* Called "algum trees" in 2 Chron. 9:10. What kind of wood was here referred to is a matter of uncertainty. No such tree as the almug or algum is known. Many think it refers to the sandalwood.

Pillars. Heb. *mis'ad*, literally "supports." The parallel passage in 2 Chron. 9:11 has *mesilloth*, the same word that is translated "highway" in Judges 20:31; 1 Sam. 6:12; Isa. 40:3. Such a meaning is quite unlikely here, and it is probable that the word should be read *mis'ad*, as in Kings.

13. *Whatsoever she asked.* In the Orient it is a custom not only to desire gifts but to ask for them. The Amarna Letters contain many items regarding the exchange of gifts from one royal house to another, and there are many requests for gifts such as ivory, ebony, chariots, horses, and gold. Solomon not only received but also gave. The queen of Sheba returned with more than she had contributed, for in addition to her material gifts she returned home with that which is of infinite worth—a knowledge of the true God.

14. *Weight of gold.* The sum given as Solomon's annual income, 666 talents of gold, is an enormous figure. The same weight of gold estimated at modern values would total more than \$18,000,000. This is more than the reported income of Persia from its 20 satrapies, which amounted to 14,560 silver talents a year. It should be noted, however, that these figures represent only the present value of the ancient weights and do not represent the actual buying power of this income in ancient times.

15. *Merchantmen.* Solomon's income consisted, not only of actual revenues from tributary states and taxes upon his subjects, but also of large gains from his own extensive merchandising activities and levies imposed upon international trade.

16. *Targets.* Large shields, or bucklers, covering the length of the body. The ones made by Solomon were probably for purposes of display, perhaps being worn by the royal bodyguard. Gold was lavishly used in Oriental lands, as can be seen by the golden chariots and coffins in Egypt.

17. *Shields of beaten gold.* These were smaller shields than the "targets" of v. 16, and were probably round. Since there were 200 targets and 300 shields, the total would be 500 in all. David's bodyguard numbered 600 men (2 Sam. 15:1). It may be that Solomon's personal bodyguard numbered 500 men, and that the golden shields were used by them on state occasions, at other times to adorn the walls of the imposing "house of

the forest of Lebanon.” A body of troops thus equipped with shields of glittering gold, marching before their king, would make a magnificent display.

18. Throne of ivory. The throne itself was probably of wood, and the ivory, cut into thin slabs and carved into decorative patterns, inlaid with gold, was applied externally as a veneer. Striking examples of this type of work have been found in Palestine, both at Samaria and Megiddo. Probably the “ivory palaces” of Ps. 45:8, and the “houses of ivory” of Amos 3:15, employed the same type of decorative effects.

19. Six steps. The throne itself was no doubt on a raised platform approached by six steps, evidently to set it apart in a commanding position.

Round. Heb. ‘*agol*, which could be spelled ‘*egel*, making the phrase read “a calf’s head at the back.” That the translators of the LXX read ‘*egel* for ‘*agol* is seen from their translation, “and calves in bold relief to the throne behind it.”

20. Twelve lions. Entrances to Assyrian palaces were usually decoratively guarded by great winged bulls, one on either side of the gateway. In other lands lions were employed for similar decorative purposes. For Solomon’s throne there was a lion on either side of each of the six steps, making an imposing approach. The 12 lions were probably emblematic of the 12 tribes.

Not the like. The lofty elevation implied by the six steps, the double row of flanking lions, and the lavish use of ivory and gold must have produced a throne whose grandeur was unequalled.

21. Drinking vessels. Goblets, bowls, and plates of gold were not uncommon in Oriental courts. Yet a draught of water is as sweet and refreshing from an earthen vessel as from the most richly engraved goblet of gold.

Of silver. According to v. 27, Solomon “made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones.” It was so plentiful that for a court so magnificent as that of Solomon, silver would not be used even for the more common utensils.

22. Tarshish (more frequently spelled Tharshish). For the name as listed among the descendants of Javan, and as applied to Tartessus in Spain, see on Gen. 10:4. Tartessus was probably the place for which Jonah sailed from Joppa (Jonah 1:3). But *Tarshish*, meaning “smelting plant,” was probably the name of several places, as in Sardinia or Tunisia, which supplied metals to Tyrian fleets (Isa. 23:1, 6, 14; Eze. 27:12, 25).

“Ships of Tarshish,” formerly held to mean ships large enough to sail to Spain, are now interpreted as a “refinery fleet.” Solomon’s fleet could not sail from Eziongeber to the Mediterranean, but probably to Ophir (see on ch. 9:26–28).

Once in three years. This “navy of Tharshish,” operating with the aid of Hiram of Tyre, seems to have been based at Eziongeber (ch. 9:26); it could have sailed from there to distant ports in Africa, India, possibly even in China. Thus a voyage of three years, with frequent stops at ports of call, would be reasonable. It is expressly stated, however, that Solomon’s ships went to Tarshish (2 Chron. 9:21); Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah made ships at “Ezion-gaber” “to go to Tarshish” (2 Chron. 20:36).

Since a fleet sailing from Ezion-geber, on the Gulf of Aqabah, could hardly have gone to Spain, and since the cargoes included “apes and peacocks” (or apes and baboons, see RSV, note), some have held that this was a Tarshish in Africa, probably in Ophir, or Punt, in Somaliland.

23. Exceeded all the kings. This was in harmony with God's promise to Solomon (1 Kings 3:13) and to Israel on condition of faithfulness (Deut. 28:1, 13). At the time of Solomon such empires as Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt were in low estate, and it was thus literally true that Solomon's kingdom ranked first in wisdom, wealth, and splendor.

24. The earth sought. It was God's purpose that Israel should be set "on high above all nations of the earth," and that it should be "the head, and not the tail" (Deut. 28:1, 13). But the child of God seeks first the kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33, Luke 12:31). The world's highest wisdom is the wisdom of God, and that wisdom is the foundation of all other wisdom, and the secret of finding the greatest blessings and treasures of earth. The purpose of God was being fulfilled in the exaltation of Israel. The nations who "sought to Solomon" were to hear of Solomon's God, and receive an invitation to accept the religion of Jehovah. Gradually, through such contacts and through aggressive missionary effort the world was to be evangelized.

Which God had put. The wisdom of Solomon, which all the earth came to hear, was that which came from God and which led to God. In this higher wisdom lay the secret of the real strength and glory of the kingdom of Israel.

25. His present. This verse indicates clearly the nature of Solomon's extensive kingdom. It consisted of a loosely compacted group of tributary states who gave allegiance and paid tribute to the dominant kingdom of Israel. Such was the nature of many early Oriental empires. Many of the states then paying tribute to Israel had undoubtedly given tribute to other great neighboring nations.

26. Chariots and horsemen. See on ch. 4:26. The gathering of chariots and horsemen is a sign of military conquest and extension of empire by force. The accumulation of horses was expressly against the purpose of God, who directed that Israel's future king should "not multiply horses to himself" (Deut. 17:16). Gains secured in such ways would in the end prove to be only loss. Solomon realized it not. Already he stood at a vital parting of the way. Before him lay the path of obedience, which would lead to continued peace and glory; and the path of disobedience, which would lead to trouble, oppression, and shame.

Cities for chariots. These cities were probably in the nature of military posts to hold the subject peoples under control. Stables at Megiddo, most probably Ahab's, have been excavated (see on ch. 9:15).

27. As stones. Silver and cedars were common, but piety was rare. Men who multiply gold multiply grief and trouble. Men who multiply true love have riches of peace and contentment that no amount of gold can ever secure (Prov. 16:8, 16).

28. Linen yarn. Heb. *miqweh*, translated variously as "gathering together" (Gen. 1:10), "pools" (Ex. 7:19), "plenty" (Lev. 11:36), "hope" (Ezra 10:2; Jer. 14:8, 17:13). Here, however, it is now definitely known to be a proper name, and should therefore be transliterated rather than translated. The LXX, for instance, renders *miqweh* as "of *Thekouē*." The RSV gives it as Kue, which has been identified as an ancient name for Cilicia. It has been suggested, furthermore, that the Hebrew word *miṣraim*, "Egypt," should read *muṣrim*, "Musri," later known as Cappadocia, a region adjacent to Cilicia, in Anatolia (Asia Minor). Kue and Musri appear together in the famous Shalmaneser III Monolith Inscription, and separately in other Assyrian sources. In the Amarna Letters and

various Assyrian texts Musri is mentioned as famous for horse breeding. The Hittites had even published a text on the subject. From Anatolia a knowledge of horse breeding spread to Syria, where a Ugaritic veterinary treatise of the 14th century deals with it.

Verse 28 may therefore be translated, “And the export of Solomon’s horses [was] from Musri [Cappadocia] and from Kue [Cilicia]; the king’s merchants obtained them from Kue at a price.” The Egyptians, so far as currently available information indicates, did not breed horses for export. There seems to be general agreement, however, that *misraim*, Egypt, is the correct reading in v. 29 (see on Gen. 10:6). Egypt was an important exporter of chariots, though not of horses. As one of his business enterprises, Solomon thus carried on what appears to have been a profitable trade in Cilician horses and Egyptian chariots.

Commerce is an honorable calling and brings many just and worth-while returns. But it also offers many temptations and often provides a swift road to ruin. As the people of Israel became more and more interested in worldly gain, they found themselves straying further and further away from God. Greed took the place of mercy, and the interests of self were served rather than the common interests of all. On such a basis the nation could not endure. People followed the king down a pathway of selfishness and folly, and though oft rebuked by the prophets, persisted in a course that could end only in ruin.

29. Hittites. At the time of Solomon the once great Hittite empire had broken in pieces, and only its fragments remained—a number of petty Hittite states in northern Syria. Both the Hittites and the Egyptians made extensive use of horses and chariots, with the result that there was an active exchange of Egyptian-made chariots and Anatolian horses. Solomon found himself in an advantageous position to act as middleman in this international exchange. As to the Anatolian interest in horse raising and training, see on v. 28. Records exist of Egyptian tribute of horses to Sargon and Ashurbanipal.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 PK 66

3–9PK 67

11 Ed 49; PK 72; 7T 217

22 Ed 49; 7T 217

26 PK 56

CHAPTER 11

1 *Solomon’s wives and concubines.* 4 *In his old age they draw him to idolatry.* 9 *God threateneth him.* 14 *Solomon’s adversaries were Hadad, who was entertained in Egypt,* 23 *Rezon, who reigned in Damascus,* 26 *and Jeroboam, to whom Ahijah prophesied.* 41 *Solomon’s acts, reign, and death: Rehoboam succeedeth him.*

1. Many strange women. Thus far in the record of Solomon’s wealth and glory many indications of moral weakness have become apparent. The excessive accumulation of silver and gold and the multiplication of horses were in violation of the warnings given by Moses (Deut. 17:16, 17). Solomon’s shortcomings along these lines have not been specifically mentioned as such. Facts are simply set forth as facts, to be interpreted by the reader as evidences of success and glory, or as winnings of trouble to come. But in regard to the multiplication of wives, the excesses of Solomon were so outstanding that particular attention is called to the monarch’s failings along this line. The multiplication of wives is mentioned by Moses in the same connection with the multiplication of horses and silver and gold (Deut. 17:16, 17). Though the defection of Solomon here is distinctly

traced to “strange women,” the part played by other factors in bringing his downfall must not be overlooked.

2. Concerning which. The Lord had given explicit instructions to the effect that there should be no intermarriage with the peoples of the land (Ex. 34:11–16; 7:1–4). Solomon, who should have set the highest example of obedience to this command and of enforcement of the law, became its most flagrant violator. The man who had been of all men most wise became of all men most foolish. It is never the course of wisdom to go contrary to an explicit command of the Lord.

3. Turned away his heart. This is exactly what the Lord had said would be the result of foreign marriages (Ex. 34:16; Deut. 7:4). Solomon was acquainted with this instruction, and there was no excuse for his violation of the explicit command.

4. Not perfect. What a pity that a man who had begun so well in his youth should make such a sad spectacle of himself in his later years. He who had been a master of men now became a profligate and a slave to his own passions. Undoubtedly Solomon kept up the formalities of his own religion, but his heart was far from perfect in the sight of God.

5. Ashtoreth. The goddess of love and fertility, whose worship was one of license and impurity.

Milcom. Chief god of the Ammonites.

Abomination. The worship of these native gods involved rites too horrible to mention. So monstrous were the crimes committed in the service of these gods that the Lord commanded that the native peoples of Canaan engaged in the worship of these deities should be utterly destroyed (Deut. 7:2–5).

7. An high place. Not only did Solomon allow his heart to be drawn out after these heathen gods, but he went so far as to establish centers for their worship. Infatuated with the beauty of his heathen wives, he united with them in their idol worship.

The hill. The Mt. of Olives, where many and beautiful buildings were erected as idolatrous shrines (see PK 57).

Molech. Probably in this verse to be read “Milcom,” which occurs in vs. 5 and 33 as likewise the god, or abomination, of the Amorites. Dropping the final *m* could change Milcom to Molech. They are almost identical (*mlkm* and *mkl*) in the vowelless Hebrew script, because the points indicating vowel sounds were added long after Bible times. There is another reason to see Milcom in this verse, which connects his high place with that of Chemosh, on a hill “before” (east of) Jerusalem. That is exactly where Milcom’s was, whereas Molech’s place of human sacrifice was in the Valley of Hinnom (2 Kings 23:13, 10).

9. Was angry. The young man who began life with so great promise, who had been shown such high favors of the Lord and had been so honored with manifestations of God’s presence, now, in later life, strayed so far away from right that the Lord became angry with him and withdrew His blessing.

11. Rend the kingdom. Solomon had grievously sinned, but God deigned to speak with him. The message was different now from what it was in the days of his youth and innocence. Then the Lord appeared with a promise of blessing; this time it was with a stern warning of the ills that disobedience must bring. He would lose the kingdom given to his father.

12. For David. The Lord remembers His own, and out of kindness to them, extends mercies to some whose shameful course deserves no mercy. God is “merciful and

gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy” (Ps. 103:8). In wrath He remembers mercy. For David’s sake the threatened judgment was deferred.

13. One tribe. Except for David’s sake, the whole kingdom would have been taken away from Solomon’s son. As it was, only one tribe, Judah (ch. 12:20), was reserved to the house of David. Benjamin and Levi (2 Chron. 11:12, 13), were to be with Judah, and were included with Judah to make one nation.

14. An adversary. The writer of Kings now presents the various troubles of Solomon’s reign. It must not be thought that these were reserved solely for the last years of his life, for as Solomon kept going ever deeper into sin he found his troubles increasing. God’s continued presence cannot abide forever with those who despise His grace. A stubborn rejection of the Lord’s mercy and love causes God at length to withdraw His restraining arm and His protecting grace, with the result that the evil one moves in to rend and destroy. Affliction and woe come from Satan. Solomon had opportunity to see in the woes that came upon him the true nature of the one he had chosen to obey.

Hadad. A common Semitic name. It occurs in the list of Edomite kings of Gen. 36:31–39, and is also found as a designation of the Syrian kings, “Ben-hadad” (1 Kings 15:18; Jer. 49:27), and “Hadadezer” (2 Sam. 8:3–6).

15. In Edom. We have here a valuable historical note. David had conquered Edom (2 Sam. 8:14; 1 Chron. 18:12, 13), but little is known of the campaign, which must have included many interesting details. This account of Solomon’s adversities brings to light a story that might not otherwise have been preserved. Evidently an attempt was made by David to wipe out this hated race to the south (1 Kings 11:15, 16), with the result that certain servants fled with the young prince, Hadad, to Egypt. It is not known who the Egyptian king was that granted asylum to Hadad, for this was a period of great uncertainty and unrest in Egypt. But to receive the royal exile was both proper Oriental etiquette and excellent politics, as in the case of Jeroboam (1 Kings 11:40). Upon the death of David, Hadad returned to Edom to be a thorn in the flesh to Solomon. Such records as this throw helpful light upon the international politics of the times.

23. Rezon. David had engaged in successful wars against the Syrian kings (2 Sam. 8:3–13; 10:6–19). The crushing of Hadadezer, king of Zobah, left the country in confusion, with the result that the leader of one of the armed bands, Rezon, was able to establish himself at Damascus as king, to be an adversary of Solomon. This is the first king of Damascus whose name is known.

26. Jeroboam. The first mention of the man whose name was to become proverbial for wickedness. The wicked kings of Israel henceforth are regularly likened to him and his “sin wherewith he made Israel to sin” (1 Kings 15:26; cf. 1 Kings 16:2, 19, 26; 21:22; 22:52; 2 Kings 3:3; 10:29, 31; 13:2, 6, 11; 14:24; 15:9, 18, 24, 28; 17:21, 22). He was from the tribe of Ephraim, which had an ancient and irrepressible jealousy of Judah, for the Lord had “refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: but chose the tribe of Judah” (Ps. 78:67, 68).

Lifted up his hand. This phrase signifies rebellion (2 Sam. 20:21).

27. Built Millo. Solomon’s work on the Millo was apparently done after he had completed his work on the Temple and palace (see 1 Kings 9:15, 24). David had previously done much to strengthen this area in the ancient Jebusite city captured by him (2 Sam. 5:9; 1 Chron. 11:8).

28. *Man of valour.* Jeroboam was a man who was alert and capable, able and courageous in the making of decisions and in the execution of them. Seldom was so much involved in raising an individual to a position of trust as there was in Solomon's selection of Jeroboam for a post of responsibility. Solomon no doubt looked at the external characteristics of the young man without being able to judge what was in his heart. Jeroboam's natural talents of leadership, if dedicated to God, would enable him to do much in the cause of right, but if not, he would do much in the cause of wrong.

The charge. Solomon made Jeroboam superintendent of all the forced labor exacted of the tribe of Ephraim for the building of Millo and the fortifying of the City of David.

30. *The new garment.* The garment was worn by the prophet (see v. 29). The English word "caught" almost implies that the prophet seized hold of Jeroboam's garment, but the Hebrew simply says, "laid hold of." The new garment represented the new kingdom so recently established, but which was about to be rent in pieces. Symbolical acts are frequent in prophecy (Jer. 13:1–11; 19:1; 27:2; Eze. 4:1–14, 9; 12:3–7; 24:3–12, 15–24), and were an effective means for bringing home in a forceful way the messages of the Lord.

31. *I will rend.* The united monarchy was to be torn in pieces, and ten of its tribes were to give their allegiance to a new lord not from the house of David. The lesson was taught that "the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (Dan. 4:17).

32. *One tribe.* Whereas ten tribes were to go to Jeroboam (v. 31), only two would go to the house of David. But Judah's "one tribe" included Benjamin (2 Chron. 11:12, 13). The kingdom of Judah also became an asylum for the Levites, who refused to endorse Jeroboam's apostate religion.

34. *For David my servant's sake.* This phrase, often repeated, makes clear God's great mercy toward His children.

Kept my commandments. It was because David was obedient to the Lord, keeping His commandments and statutes, that God extended great favors to him. This commendation of David is remarkable in view of David's grievous errors, as in the matter of Uriah, the Hittite (2 Sam. 11) and in the act of numbering Israel (2 Sam. 24). Of both of these failings David sincerely repented, and through the provisions of grace was accepted as if he had never committed these infractions. Character is not finally determined by occasional deeds or misdeeds, but by the habitual tendency of the life.

36. *A light.* God intends that the path of the just shall be like a "shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18). Thus it should have been with the light of David. It should never have gone out, but should have increased in brilliance in his posterity (1 Kings 15:4; 2 Kings 8:19; cf. 2 Sam. 14:7). The very opposite was the case. In Rehoboam the brilliance of the light was greatly diminished. It continued dim through the centuries until at last it flickered and went out when the remnant of Judah was carried captive into Babylon (2 Kings 25).

38. *If thou.* Jeroboam was a young man of promise. He had outstanding abilities that would make him a powerful leader and a strong influence for good, if he would walk in the ways of the Lord. God is not partial, but grants His blessings to all who are faithful to Him.

A sure house. The promise was conditional, and inasmuch as the condition was not met, it did not take effect. Disobedience is a foundation of sand, and no house built upon

it can stand (Matt. 7:24–27). Jeroboam's dynasty came to an end with his son Nadab (1 Kings 15:25, 28).

39. *Not for ever.* The Lord's afflictions are temporal, not eternal; His mercies endure forever (Ps. 103:8, 9, 17). Because of the failure of David's descendants, the promises to David were to meet their complete fulfillment in the spiritual house of the NT church and in Christ, the Son of David, the Head of the church.

40. *To kill Jeroboam.* There may have been good cause for Solomon to turn against his servant, for Jeroboam had "lifted up his hand" against him (v. 26). The overt acts of Jeroboam that incurred the king's displeasure are not related, but undoubtedly Jeroboam was ambitious, and took measures to secure for himself the crown. He belonged to one of the leading tribes, which, in the partition of Palestine, had been given the best position in the land, at once its choicest region and its very heart and center. The Ephraimites were sensitive about their alleged superiority and felt that when important decisions were made, they should be consulted (Judges 8:1; 12:1). Undoubtedly it was the ambition and pride of Jeroboam that brought him into disfavor with the king.

Shishak king of Egypt. This is the first king of Egypt mentioned in the Bible by name. He was the first king of a new dynasty. Shishak has been identified with the vigorous and able Sheshonk I, founder of the Twenty-second Dynasty. He was a Libyan, and had been a commander of mercenary troops before he seized the throne. His capital was at Bubastis in the Delta. It was customary for ancient nations who were not bound together by treaty obligations, to grant asylum to political refugees.

41. *The book of the acts.* The Hebrews kept official records of state. Thus David had a scribe and recorder (2 Sam. 8:16, 17; 20:24, 25), with the records of his reign preserved in "the account of the chronicles of king David" (1 Chron. 27:24). The accounts of the later rulers of Israel were kept in a volume known as "the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel" (1 Kings 14:19; 15:31; 22:39; 2 Kings 10:34), and those of Judah in "the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah" (1 Kings 14:29; 15:7, 23; 2 Kings 8:23). Other records for the reign of Solomon were "the book of Nathan the prophet," "the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite," and "the visions of Iddo the seer against Jeroboam the son of Nebat" (2 Chron. 9:29). For the prophet Iddo there was yet another volume entitled "Iddo the seer concerning genealogies" (2 Chron. 12:15). The prophets here appear in the character of annalists. The narrative as given in Kings is evidently a compilation drawn from various sources. Every confidence can be placed in the historical accuracy of the material in Kings, based as it is on complete, original, and official sources, and brought into final form under divine inspiration.

42. *Forty years.* From David on, the OT preserves the lengths of reign of the various kings of Israel and Judah. Josephus gives the length of Solomon's reign as 80 years (*Antiquities* viii. 7. 8). This demonstrates that the figures of Josephus often differ widely from the Biblical figures, and cannot always be depended upon.

43. *Slept with his fathers.* Verses 41 to 43 present an official formula henceforth to be followed in recording the accounts of the kings. This formula includes a statement as to the official record from which the account was taken, states the fact that the king slept with his fathers, names the place of burial, and gives the name of the successor (see 1 Kings 14:29, 31; 15:7, 8, 23, 24; 2 Kings 8:23, 24; 12:19, 21; etc.).

City of David. This was henceforth the regular burial place for the kings of Judah. In a few instances burial was in a private sepulcher (see 2 Kings 21:18, 26; 23:30). Under

special circumstances burial was in the City of David but not in the royal sepulcher (see 2 Chron. 21:20; 24:25; 26:23; 28:27). As a token of respect Jehoiada the priest was buried in the royal tombs (2 Chron. 24:16). Of Hezekiah it is said that “they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David” (2 Chron. 32:33).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–8FE 498; PP 51–60; 2T 306; 6T 250

4 4T 508

4, 5 PK 56

6–8PK 405

7 PK 57

9, 10 PK 75

11, 12, 14–28PK 77

28, 31, 33PK 87

34, 35 PK 88

43 PK 878

CHAPTER 12

1 *The Israelites, assembled at Shechem to crown Rehoboam, by Jeroboam make a suit of relaxation unto him. 6 Rehoboam, refusing the old men’s counsel, by the advice of young men, answereth them roughly. 16 Ten tribes revolting, kill Adoram, and make Rehoboam to flee. 21 Rehoboam, raising an army, is forbidden by Shemaiah. 25 Jeroboam strengtheneth himself by cities, 26 and by the idolatry of the two calves.*

1. Rehoboam. The comparatively detailed style of the narrative of the reign of Solomon is continued through chs. 12, 13, 14. The record in Chronicles, after omitting the whole account of Solomon’s idolatry and his adversaries, gives the early part of the account of Rehoboam in almost the same words as those in Kings 2 Chron. 10:1–19; 11:1–4 cf. 1 Kings 12:1–24).

Shechem. The choice of Shechem for the coronation was probably to secure the allegiance of Ephraim and the northern tribes. Shechem lay in the very center of the land, between Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal, at the site where Joshua had held a general assembly of the people (Joshua 8:30–35). It was near there that Joseph was buried (Joshua 24:32). Nearby was the site of Jacob’s well (Gen. 33:19; Gen. 37:12; John 4:5, 6; cf. Joshua 24:32).

3. Called him. The record in 2 Chron. 10:2, 3, seems to imply that Jeroboam was called, not from Egypt, but from Ephraim, for Jeroboam had doubtless already returned from Egypt. Jeroboam was a recognized leader. There was just cause for grievance against the throne, and it would be only natural to present the matter on such an occasion, and to have Jeroboam participate in the proceedings.

4. Yoke grievous. The complaint was well founded. The people were not happy with the heavy weight of taxation and the forced draft of labor required by Solomon for his extensive public works. As superintendent of the levy of forced labor in Ephraim, Jeroboam had no doubt listened to many complaints and was probably better informed concerning the widespread dissatisfaction that existed than were other advisers of the king. The request made for a lightening of the load was fair, and it would be a matter both of justice and prudence to give ear to the people’s complaints.

5. For three days. That is, till the third day, the day after tomorrow (v. 12).

6. The old men. Solomon's counselors would be in a position to know the temper of the people and to give good counsel concerning the course to follow. These men were not necessarily old in years but old in experience.

7. A servant. A king's first duty to his people is to serve, not rule. If a people know that their interests are the first interests of their ruler, their hearts will be knit with his, and they will be his willing servants. Christ came into the world "not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28).

8. Forsook the counsel. Age brings experience, and wisdom increases with age. Where those who are young both in years and experience forsake the counsel of their elders, there the counsel of folly prevails.

Young men. It is perfectly proper to take counsel with the young as well as the old, but it should be remembered that the eyes of youth see not what is seen with the eyes of experience and age.

10. Thus shalt thou speak. The counsel given by Rehoboam's young companions was not that of wisdom but of rashness and arrogance. It showed no tender solicitude for the welfare of those the king had been appointed to serve, but a determination to rule regardless of the expressed will of the people. The counsel given was couched in needlessly offensive language, and was such as would not allay trouble but aggravate it. The young men mistook obstinacy for vigor, and conceit for wisdom. They failed to read the signs of the times, and their counsel made rebellion inevitable.

11. Scorpions. Thought to be a figure of speech representing whips armed with sharp hooks or points, the stings of which were unusually severe.

13. Roughly. The purpose, of course, was to make a show of strength, but in reality it was only a demonstration of weakness and folly. Kind words come from kind, largehearted men, and lead to submission and obedience, to happiness and peace. Rough words come from little men, and excite passion and bitterness, and lead to uproar and revolt.

15. From the Lord. It must not be thought that the counsel given by the young men was the counsel of God, or that the answer given by the king was dictated by the Lord. God is a God of kindness and wisdom, but the words of the king were those of hardheartedness and folly. God disposes man to sympathy and charity, not to resentment or malice. But the Lord does bring men to judgment by permitting them to reap the fruit of their own perversity. Neither Solomon's sins nor Rehoboam's rashness and imprudence were from the Lord. Both were wrong, and both proceeded from a source alien to God. But the Lord in His wisdom permitted a course that punished sin with sin and folly with folly. The Lord does not, as a rule, work a miracle that counteracts the results of human passions, anger, pride, perversity, and arrogance. Without interfering with man's free will as far as personal salvation is concerned, and without influencing causatively evil deeds on the part of unholy men, God guides wisely the courses of men and nations and accomplishes His will. Thus He makes the wrath of man to praise Him.

16. In David. The words breathe the spirit of tribal jealousy and enmity. Ephraim was arrayed against Judah; the people of the north were determined to go their way independent of the south. Sheba employed similar words in his rebellion against David (2 Sam. 20:1).

To your tents. This was not necessarily a war cry, but it was a call for everyone to return to his tribe and home without acknowledging Rehoboam.

See to thine own house. This is an expression of the deeply rooted dislike to David's royal house. Let that house see about its own affairs and its own tribe, and leave the rest of Israel alone. They will take care of themselves independently of Judah, and will henceforth brook no interference.

17. Children of Israel. This phrase seems to have a double significance. First, it indicates that in the territory of Judah there were those who were not members of the tribe of Judah. In addition to Benjamin, which had its part with Judah, many priests and Levites and people "out of all the tribes of Israel" later forsook the north and joined themselves with Judah and Jerusalem (2 Chron. 11:12–17). Second, although Israel henceforth was to mean primarily the northern kingdom in antithesis to Judah, the phrase "children of Israel" was probably intended to remind the reader that true children of Israel were also to be found in Judah and that the northern kingdom possessed no exclusive right to this proud title.

18. Adoram. According to 1 Kings 4:6; 5:14, Adoniram (a lengthened form of Adoram) was over the levy. Adoram, being well versed in the grievances concerning forced labor, Rehoboam probably believed him to be the proper man to negotiate in regard to this matter. But the sight of this man, the taskmaster of the oppressed people, aroused a fresh burst of fury, resulting in Adoram's death.

Stoned. A usual mode of death in ancient times in cases of mob vengeance. In Egypt, Moses had expressed the fear that the Egyptians might arise in wrath to stone the children of Israel (Ex. 8:26). Later the Israelites were almost ready to stone Moses (Ex. 17:4). David too faced the danger of such a death by an angry group (1 Sam. 30:6).

To his chariot. The chariot provided the most rapid means of conveyance. Improved roads made it possible to use chariots in many parts of Palestine.

20. Jeroboam was come. These words seem to imply that Jeroboam came on the scene only after the revolt of the ten tribes. However, according to v. 3, Jeroboam had already acted as head of the people's delegation to Rehoboam. Some follow one of the manuscripts of the LXX which omits Jeroboam's name in vs. 3 and 12, and make v. 20 represent his first appearance on the scene. It is, however, better to follow the Hebrew and to understand the "all Israel" of v. 1 to mean the representatives of the different tribes, and "all Israel" of v. 20 to mean the nation, which had heard from its representatives, on their return to their homes (v. 16), of the presence of Jeroboam in the country.

The news of the insurrection soon was carried throughout the realm. After setting the rebellion on foot Jeroboam probably astutely refrained from further steps, awaiting the call of the people. A great congregation was called, and Jeroboam was made king.

Over all Israel. This phrase seems to indicate a claim on the part of the ten northern tribes that they alone constituted the true Israel.

21. Benjamin. The tribe of Benjamin had previously been more closely connected with Ephraim than with Judah. The long feud between David and Saul, the Benjamite (1 Sam. 9:1), the wars of Joab and Abner, between the servants of David and those of Benjamin (2 Sam. 2:2, 12–31; 3:1–27), and the call to arms against David by Sheba, the Benjamite (2 Sam. 20:1), all indicate the antipathy of Benjamin against Judah. But the establishment of the capital at Jerusalem, on the border between the two tribes (Joshua 15:8; 18:16), helped to bring about a change, and henceforth the lot of Benjamin was to be one with that of Judah.

An hundred and fourscore thousand. At the time of David's census Judah numbered 500,000 (2 Sam. 24:9). Some time later Abijah was able to muster an army of 400,000 (2 Chron. 13:3).

22. Man of God. The term was used of Moses (Deut. 33:1; Joshua 14:6), and is used only rarely in the earlier or later Scriptures, including Chronicles, but it is a favorite expression of the writer of Kings. Shemaiah was the chief prophet of Judah during the reign of Rehoboam (2 Chron. 12:5–8, 15).

24. Ye shall not go up. Civil war is generally the most deadly kind of war, its wounds the hardest to heal. God had not brought the Israelites into Canaan to destroy one another. Nor indeed had He designed that they should divide into two hostile kingdoms. The Lord could not bless the seceding ten tribes. Neither could He endorse the harsh governmental policies that Rehoboam had announced. The loss of the ten tribes was a judgment upon Rehoboam. Hence the Lord could not give His blessing to a campaign that sought by force of arms to bring those tribes back again under Rehoboam. Rather, God decreed that time should unroll the history of both kingdoms, that His condemnation of the one and His judgment upon the other, should be demonstrated as just. Zealous men are often in haste to resolve a difficult matter that involves wrongs on both sides. Such men might well ponder the lesson found in this verse.

25. Shechem. This city is mentioned in patriarchal history from the time Abraham first entered the Land of Promise (Gen. 12:6; 33:18; 35:4; 37:12, 13). At the time of the conquest of Canaan it became a city of refuge (Joshua 20:7; 21:21), and it was there that Joshua gathered all the tribes for a renewal of the covenant just before his death (Joshua 24:1–25). When Abimelech made himself king over Israel, he had his capital at Shechem (Judges 9:1–20), and when the city rebelled against him, it was destroyed and sowed “with salt” (Judges 9:22–45). Now the city was rebuilt as Jeroboam's capital.

Penuel. A place east of Jordan named by Jacob after he had seen God face to face (Gen. 32:30, 31). At the time of Gideon there was a tower at Penuel, which Gideon destroyed (Judges 8:8, 9, 17). Jeroboam rebuilt the city as an outpost. A possible site is *Tulul ed-dabab*, on the river Jabbok, 4 1/8 mi. (6.5 km.) east of Succoth.

27. Turn again. Jeroboam well understood the strong appeal of the worship of the Lord at the Temple in Jerusalem. If Israel remained faithful to God, and if they continued to go to Jerusalem to worship with their brethren of Judah, the hearts of the people would again be drawn together, and the kingdom once more would be united. Such an outcome certainly would have been for the common good of all. But that was not Jeroboam's first interest.

28. Calves of gold. This was a renewal of the worship by which Israel had brought judgments on themselves in the wilderness (Ex. 32:1–35). By thus rejecting the Lord, Israel was taking a course that could end only in ruin. Disaster is inevitable when men forsake the Creator of heaven and earth for the worship of calves of gold.

29. Beth-el. A southern frontier town of the kingdom. Bethel means “house of God,” and was named by Jacob in memory of the dream in which God appeared to him on the occasion of his flight from Esau (Gen. 28:11–22) and again upon his return (Gen. 35:8–15). It was thought to be a natural place for a rival shrine.

Dan. A northern frontier town that had already been the site of a shrine during much of the period of the judges (Judges 18:30, 31).

30. *Became a sin.* That is, it became an occasion of sin to the people. In view of the far-reaching effects of the sin a fearful responsibility rested upon Jeroboam.

Before the one. Some of the later manuscripts of the LXX add after Dan, “and to the other unto Bethel.” But it is probably better to take the words as they stand, implying that the people at first resorted almost exclusively to the sanctuary in Dan.

31. *Of the lowest.* The Levites refused to serve as priests in these idolatrous shrines, and being cut off from their sacred office, made their way to Judah and Jerusalem (2 Chron. 11:13–16; PK 101). Only people of the lowest moral standards would consent to serve as “priests for the high places and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made” (2 Chron. 11:15). The result was continually lower and lower moral standards among the people.

32. *Eighth month.* This was a rival feast to the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem in the seventh month. There was a semblance of holding to certain forms of the old religion, but in many respects the new religion was the direct opposite of the worship of Jehovah. The question has been raised as to why the feast in Israel should be held a month later than in Judah. It may be that the break between Israel and Judah took place at this time, and that this general festival of the people was immediately instituted to give opportunity for hailing the establishment of the new regime.

33. *He offered.* Jeroboam seems to have taken upon himself priestly as well as kingly functions. Having set aside the Levitical priesthood and consecrated new priests of his own choosing, Jeroboam could well have crowned the proceedings by assuming the role of supreme head of the unauthorized priesthood that he had created. Bethel is called the place both of “the king’s chapel” and of “the king’s court” (Amos 7:10, 13). That might indicate that the “chapel” at Bethel was his own special shrine where the king presided in religious affairs, and that it likewise had a court where he officiated in affairs of state. Shechem was the regular capital and the usual place where the king held court, but when he officiated as priest at Bethel, court was probably held at his palace there.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–24PK 88–92
4 PK 55, 88
4, 5 PP 526
9–11PK 89
12–14PK 90
15 PK 91
16 PK 90
18 PK 91
20 PK 99
21–24PK 92
26, 27 PK 99
28 PK 100
28–33PK 401
29 PK 100
31, 32 PK 101

CHAPTER 13

1 *Jeroboam’s hand, that offered violence to him that prophesied against his altar at Bethel, withereth, 6 and at the prayer of the prophet is restored. 7 The prophet, refusing the*

king's entertainment, departeth from Beth-el. 11 An old prophet, seducing him, bringeth him back. 20 He is reprov'd by God, 23 slain by a lion, 26 buried by the old prophet, 31 who confirmeth his prophecy. 33 Jeroboam's obstinacy.

1. Jeroboam stood. The occasion was one of importance, Jeroboam was officiating as priest at the dedication of the new altar at Bethel, endeavoring to invest it with a sanctity that would win for it the homage and respect of the people, God could not allow the king's bold defiance to go unrebuked.

2. Josiah by name. The Lord does not often predict the future with such definite detail as to point out the specific actors. A parallel example is found in the reference to Cyrus, the Persian king, by name many years before his birth (Isa. 44:28; 45:1). This prophecy concerning Josiah was literally fulfilled (2 Kings 23:15, 16).

3. A sign. So that Jeroboam and the people might be impressed that the man of God was a true prophet and that his message of warning carried weight, he gave a striking prophecy, which would be immediately fulfilled.

4. Put forth. It is dangerous for anyone, whoever he be, to lift up his hand against a man sent with a solemn message from God. The stretched-forth arm was immediately smitten, to strike terror into the hearts of both king and people, and to impress them anew that they had before them a true prophet of God.

5. The altar also was rent. This manifestation of the Lord's presence and power was something that could not be successfully gainsaid. Instead of being persuaded of the solemnity of the altar and the sanctity of their priestly king, the people now realized that Jeroboam was acting in direct defiance of Heaven and bringing upon himself the divine rebuke.

6. Pray for me. The king had been humbled. He had also been brought to a realization that he was dealing with a man of God, who, under the circumstances, alone could release him from his present plight. The restoration of the arm on the submission of the king and the prayer of the prophet was designed to give Jeroboam another opportunity for repentance. He had not yet gone too far for the Lord to forgive. If the king had been willing to go all the way, and had asked for a restoration of heart as well as of hand, the way would have been opened for a return of the nation of God and a mighty reform throughout the land of Israel.

7. A reward. The offer of the king was prompted not by gratitude but by policy. An acceptance of hospitality and reward would in the eyes of the people imply that the prophet condoned the king's course and would serve to destroy the solemn impression that he had made. He would also have created an unfavorable impression regarding his character and mission.

8. I will not go. The resolute refusal to receive the king's proffered reward placed the prophet on vantage ground and made a deep impression upon both king and people.

11. An old prophet. A prophet, but a false prophet, a man who was a tool of Satan, not of God. Having failed to secure his purpose in one way, Satan now worked in another way, determined to thwart the purposes of the Lord by bringing His messenger into disrepute.

15. Come home. That is exactly the invitation that had been extended by the king and had been refused on the ground that it was against the expressed will of God (v. 9). The enemy is very persistent, and returns again and again with his temptations, modified in one way or another, determined to bring about a man's fall.

18. A prophet also. He was, but not God's prophet. the Lord never sends contradictory messages by His prophets.

An angel spake. Perhaps, but if so it must have been an evil angel that spoke. When God had forbidden man to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil under pain of death, the serpent came with the contradictory message, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4). The words of the false prophet identified their source. The true prophet should have known that if he himself had indeed been sent by the Lord, then the angel that spoke through the prophet of Bethel was a messenger of Satan.

He lied. Satan is a liar and deceiver, and should be recognized by the children of God by means of his deceptive wiles.

19. Went back. A messenger of God can never go back from God's errands and yet be true to the Lord. The prophet had his instructions from God, and had twice voiced them as reasons for refusing to give ear to a contrary call (vs. 8, 9, 16, 17). In going contrary to the express directions from the Lord, he was placing himself on the enemy's ground, where the Lord could not be with him.

20. Word of the Lord. At this time God did speak through the false prophet of the true. The man of God was brought to see his mistake by words delivered by an emissary of Satan. After the man of God had disobeyed the express command of the Lord, God permitted that fact to be brought home to him by a man who had allowed himself to be used as a messenger of the evil one (see PK 106).

22. Thy carcass. The desire to be buried in the family sepulcher was especially strong among the Hebrews. This privilege was to be denied the disobedient prophet. The tree of evil produced an early and certain harvest. The prophet of God had by his disobedience put himself on the enemy's ground, where he would have neither the divine presence nor protection.

24. A lion met him. Prophets often meet lions, but as long as they are on errands for God they need have no fear. No man can have greater boldness, no man has stronger reasons for courage, than the messenger venturing forth in obedience to the Lord's commands. To him the promises apply: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20); "Fear not: for I am with thee" (Isa. 43:5). Daniel was cast into a den of lions, but on him the lions had no power, for the Lord was with him. He explained that that was because innocency had been found in him (Dan. 6:22). That testimony the prophet on this occasion could not bear.

26. Who was disobedient. One hour the man of God was a man with a mission, the next a corpse by the wayside. Disobedience to God was the cause of his swift and inglorious death. The speedy penalty that overtook him was a further testimony to the king and people of Israel that obedience to the Lord's commands is the only path of safety. In the rending of the altar, the withered arm of the king, and the swift death of the prophet who had gone contrary to the Lord's command, the nation could have perceived the Lord's displeasure, and His purpose to make entirely clear to Israel that the pathway of disobedience is the pathway of sorrow and death.

30. His own grave. Probably as a token of remorse and personal compassion for the victim of his own treachery. Burial in Palestine was often in rock-hewn tombs where families might be buried together.

My brother! The true prophet was identified with the false, as the true religion of Jehovah was being identified with the new idolatrous religion of Jeroboam. It was

probably only another effort to confuse the minds of the people so that they might not perceive the seriousness of the issues at stake. The disobedience of the prophet was playing into the hands of wickedness.

31. *Beside his bones.* That is, lay my body in the cell next to his. We were brothers in life; we will be brothers in death. The bones of both prophets were found in the crypt by King Josiah when he defiled the altar at Bethel by burning on it human bones from the sepulchers, but the bones of the two prophets were not molested (2 Kings 23:17, 18).

32. *Surely come to pass.* The prophecy was not conditional. The message of warning was given in mercy and love, to save the kingdom of Israel from the doom its course of evil must inevitably bring.

33. *Returned not.* A warning had been given, and a warning had been rejected. The king persisted in his evil way in spite of the prophecy of doom. Henceforth he could blame none other than himself for the results that were to accrue from his evil ways.

34. *Destroy it.* The house of Jeroboam, which might have been sure, was soon to perish. When Jeroboam rejected the divine warning and persisted in his evil ways, he sentenced his own house to ruin. Sin cannot, must not, will not endure, forever (see Isa. 1:28; see also Ps. 34:16; 37:9).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–34PK 101–107

1 PK 101, 401

2 PK 402

2, 3 PK 101

4 3T 278

4–6PK 102

7–9PK 105

18–26PK 106

33, 34 PK 107

CHAPTER 14

1 *Abijah being sick, Jeroboam sendeth his wife disguised with presents to the prophet Ahijah at Shiloh. 5 Ahijah, forewarned by Good, denounceth God's judgment. 17 Abijah dieth, and is buried. 19 Nodab succeedeth Jeroboam. 21 Rehoboam's wicked reign. 25 Shishak spoileth Jerusalem. 29 Abijam succeedeth Rehoboam.*

1. *Abijah.* The event is selected to show the persistence of Jeroboam in his course of evil and the judgments that were to fall upon him and his house as a result. The name of the son, Abijah, means “Jehovah is my father,” and is probably an indication that when the child was born, Jeroboam did not intend to forsake the worship of Jehovah. The coincidence of the name with that of Rehoboam's son, Abijam (v. 31), or Abijah (2 Chron. 12:16), is of interest. Possibly it is more than a coincidence, since the births of the two sons may have taken place at about the same time, when Jeroboam was in favor with Solomon.

2. *Shiloh.* This town had been the central place of worship for 300 years, from the time the ark was placed there after the conquest (Joshua 18:1) until the taking of the ark by the Philistines (1 Sam. 4:4, 11), at which time Shiloh too is believed to have been destroyed (see Jer. 7:12; PK 415, 416). It was, however, the home of the old blind prophet Ahijah, who had told Jeroboam that he would be king (1 Kings 11:29–31). Shiloh was in the territory of Israel, 10 mi. south of Shechem. It is thus evident that in spite of

the new idolatry at Bethel and Dan, God still regarded Israel as His chosen people, to whom His prophets were to minister, and to whom these ministrations were of primary importance. When Jeroboam wanted a message from God, he knew it could be secured from the prophet Ahijah. Disguised as a daughter of the people, Jeroboam's wife was thus sent to approach the prophet.

3. Take with thee. The humble gift accords with the custom of the times (1 Sam. 9:7, 8), of approaching the prophet with some present, however trifling. It was a token of appreciation and respect.

Cracknels. Cakes, probably of a hard, brittle variety.

4. Were set. Heb. *qamu*. The same word is rendered "were dim" in 1 Sam. 4:15. Even prophets of God are subject to the common afflictions of man.

5. The Lord said. The wife of Jeroboam meant to deceive the prophet, but God gave him mental sight. The prophet's full knowledge of the circumstances of the visit was confirmatory evidence to Jeroboam that he was receiving a message direct from the Lord.

7. Tell Jeroboam. Previously Ahijah had been sent to Jeroboam with the cheering words that he was to be king, and that if faithful, the Lord would be with him and give him a sure house (ch. 11:38). But Jeroboam had not obeyed the Lord's commands; he had grievously sinned and had led Israel into sin. At a time when the king was looking for a word of hope, God could give him only a message of rebuke.

8. From the house of David. Jeroboam had before him the example of Solomon's wayward life. Indeed he had received his kingdom because it had been taken away from Solomon's son, Rehoboam. Jeroboam therefore stood without excuse before God and before all Israel.

9. Above all. The language is strong, but not too strong. There had been sinners among the leaders of Israel before the days of Jeroboam, but none to equal Jeroboam in his gross iniquities. Jeroboam repudiated the God who had given him the kingdom, serving idols instead. The warnings that had been given, he contemptuously spurned. God's inheritance had been placed in his hands as a sacred trust, but he failed to be true. The people of Israel were deliberately led into sin, encouraged to turn their backs on the Lord, who had delivered them from Egypt and given them the Promised Land.

10. Cut off. All the males of the family of Jeroboam were to be put to death, so that his house would perish. This was done by Baasha (ch. 15:29). The phrase used to denote males was a common expression of the period, from the time of David (1 Sam. 25:22, 34), through Baasha (1 Kings 16:11), to Ahab (1 Kings 21:21; 2 Kings 9:8), and is a term of contempt applied to such males as are doomed to utter destruction.

Shut up and left. The meaning of this phrase is not clear, but it is used in the connection with the contemptuous term applied to such males as were to be cast away and rooted out (1 Kings 21:21; 2 Kings 9:8), and at times of calamity or adversity (Deut. 32:36; 2 Kings 14:26). The expression seems to be idiomatic, and various meanings have been assigned to it such as (1) married and single, (2) bond and free, (3) precious and vile, (4) minors and those of age.

11. Dogs eat. The same terrible judgment was pronounced on others who had grossly sinned (chs. 16:4; 21:24). Dogs were common scavengers in Oriental cities, and often feasted on unburied bodies of the dead.

12. The child shall die. Scarcely a message to comfort a mother's aching heart or for a father anxiously hoping for the healing of his child. The death of the child was to be to

Jeroboam a type of the doom of his house, which, if he continued in his evil ways, would be utterly destroyed. Perhaps the death of this son might so touch the heart of the king as to bring him to reason and to God.

13. *Some good thing.* To allow this son to die was no doubt an act of mercy on the part of God. God saw what goodness there was in the heart of the young man, and dealt with him accordingly. There is something singularly pathetic in this announcement of death as the only reward possible in view of the coming judgments. There are times when even death is a blessing to the righteous.

14. *A king.* This was Baasha, who slew Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, and wiped out every member of the house of Jeroboam (ch. 15:28, 29).

Even now. Judgment would not wait long. The day of doom had already dawned, and anyone who read the signs of the times might know that the times were evil. The thought is similar to that expressed by Jesus, "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?" (Luke 12:49).

15. *Beyond the river.* The Euphrates. Here is foretold the future captivity. The pronouncement of judgment, however, was conditional, and would be carried out only if the nation did not repent (Jer. 18:7, 8).

Groves. Heb. *'asherim*. See on Ex. 34:13; Deut. 7:5; Judges 6:25. The native religions of Palestine were fertility cults, consisting of the worship of male and female divinities, and involving the grossest immoralities. Groves, tree stumps, or wooden poles were symbols of the female divinity, commonly known as Asherah. The Baalim were male gods, and both were often found close together. Thus Gideon threw down the altar of Baal and cut down the grove that was by it (Judges 6:25–30). God's people were expressly forbidden to plant an Asherah of any tree near the altar of the Lord (Deut. 16:21). Israel was carried into captivity because it had "made a grove" and "served Baal" (2 Kings 17:16). Manasseh incurred the Lord's displeasure because "he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel" (2 Kings 21:3). Josiah broke down "the altar at Beth-el," which Jeroboam had made, and "burned the grove" (2 Kings 23:15).

17. *Tirzah.* Jeroboam seems to have moved his capital from Shechem to Tirzah. Tirzah continued as the capital of Israel till Omri founded Samaria (1 Kings 16:23, 24).

18. *They buried him.* The mention of the death and burial of Jeroboam's son Abijah marks the close of the detailed record of Jeroboam's reign. There were many other servants, such as the war between Jeroboam and Abijah of Judah (2 Chron. 13:2–20), but all this the narrator in Kings passed by. From all the available material he selected one item, the sickness and death of Abijah, in order to bring home the lesson of judgment on the house of Jeroboam, who had made Israel to sin.

19. *The rest of the acts.* This is part of a regular formula used to close the accounts of the king's reigns. There were always other items concerning the kings than those that had been selected—in Jeroboam's case "how he warred, and how he reigned." Such items might be found in the official annals, "the chronicles of the kings of Israel," for the Israelite kings.

20. *Two and twenty years.* This figure represents the official years of the king's reign. The actual length of reign was only 21 years. In the method of reckoning used by the kings of Israel at this time, the remainder of the calendar year during which a king came

to the throne was termed that king's first year, whereas the earlier portion of that year had already been assigned to the preceding king as his last year (see on ch. 15:28).

In his stead. An item concerning the successor is the closing one in a regular formula henceforth used to close the account of each king (see on ch. 11:43).

21. Reigned in Judah. This statement illustrates how the reigns of kings are introduced in the official formula. The record of Rehoboam's visit to Shechem for his coronation and of his hurried retreat to Jerusalem because of the rebellion of the northern tribes has already been given (ch. 12:1–24). Next follows the account of Jeroboam's reign (chs. 12:25 to 14:20), and now comes the record of Rehoboam's reign after the official introduction. The records for the kings both of Judah and of Israel for a period till the appearance of Elijah (ch. 17:1) are brief. Supplementary material is, however, found in 2 Chron. 11:1 to 16:14.

Forty and one years old. He must, therefore, have been born before his father, Solomon, came to the throne, since Solomon reigned 40 years (ch. 11:42).

Seventeen years. These were official years, but in this case they were also actual years. The system of reckoning was different in Judah from that in Israel (see on v. 20). In Judah the remainder of the calendar year during which a king came to the throne was not termed his first year. His first official year was counted from the beginning of the next calendar year.

Naamah an Ammonitess. It is curious that the succession should pass to the son of an earlier wife than the one who was probably Solomon's chief queen, the daughter of Pharaoh. The reference to the queen mother is usual in the royal annals.

22. Judah did evil. The primary motive in the records in Kings seems to be to disclose the part each individual played in the religious history of the kingdom. In the cases of certain kings the information is that it was the ruler who did evil (2 Kings 17:2; 21:2, 20; 23:32, 37; 24:9, 19), but in the case of Rehoboam the record states that "Judah did evil." The apostasy in Judah was evidently the harvest of the deadly seed sown by the evil example of Solomon, under whose idolatry the young men of the nation had grown up. Rehoboam was weak and vacillating, and did not take the initiative in restraining the people when they did wrong.

23. Images. Heb. *maṣṣebot*, literally, "pillars." There were repeated commands to destroy the pillars erected by the Canaanites, as well as to cut down and burn their groves (Ex. 23:24; 34:13; Deut. 7:5; 12:3; see on Deut. 16:22). The pillars erected by Jacob (Gen. 28:18; 31:13; 35:14) were not objects of worship (see on Gen. 28:18).

24. Sodomites. Heb. *qadesh*, male temple prostitutes. They carried on their abominable trade under a religious sanction. It was for the practice of such abominations as these that the ancient inhabitants of the land were to be cast out, and now the people of Judah were rivaling them in wickedness (see 1 Kings 15:12; 2 Kings 23:7).

25. Shishak. Known in Egyptian history as Sheshonk I. He was the founder of Egypt's Twenty-second Dynasty. He made his famous raid against Judah in the fifth year of Rehoboam. This record is remarkably confirmed by the celebrated inscription at Karnak, enumerating the conquests of Sheshonk and listing cities captured on that campaign. Among the places that can be identified are many within the borders of Israel, chiefly in the plain of Esdraelon, such as Taanach, Megiddo, Beth-shan, Shunem, and others. Socoh and Arad are the only well-known towns in Judah whose names have been read. Some have thought that at the time of this attack, the aforementioned cities in Israel had

been captured and were being held by Rehoboam, with the result that Jeroboam invited his former protector to effect a rescue. It is more probable that Sheshonk had certain grievances against Jeroboam, who may not have fulfilled promises made before he became king over Israel. The fragment of a victory stele found in the excavation of Megiddo indicates that Sheshonk dealt with that city as conquered and not liberated.

26. *The treasures.* There is a touch of pathos in this looting of the Temple treasures, which David and Solomon had so laboriously gathered and which were the glory of all Israel. But this sad experience was only a foretaste of sadder days yet to come.

27. *Brasen shields.* The fact that the shields of brass were committed to the chief of the guard indicates that the golden shields had been for the use of the guard on state occasions.

29. *The book of the chronicles.* The reference to this source for the original records of the kings of Judah constitutes another item in the official formula closing the account of each king. This volume is constantly cited from here on throughout the history of Judah (see 1 Kings 15:7, 23; 22:45; 2 Kings 8:23; 12:19; 14:18; 15:6, 36; 16:19; etc.).

30. *There was war.* Of this war no specific accounts have been preserved. References to such particulars as this, not otherwise mentioned in connection with the record in Kings, frequently occur in the closing statement about a king's reign.

31. *Rehoboam slept.* See on ch. 11:43.

His mother's name. Reference to the queen mother was made in v. 21. The usual place for such a mention is in the statement introducing the reign of the king. This is the only instance where such an item occurs as a part of a king's closing regnal formula.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

15, 16 PK 108

16 PK 107

25 PK 94

26, 27 PK 95

31 PK 96

CHAPTER 15

1 *Abijam's wicked reign.* 7 *Asa succeedeth him.* 9 *Asa's good reign.* 16 *The war between Baasha and him causeth him to make a league with Ben-hadad.* 23 *Jehoshaphat succeedeth Asa.* 25 *Nadab's wicked reign.* 27 *Baasha conspiring against him executeth Ahijah's prophecy.* 31 *Nadab's acts and death.* 33 *Baasha's wicked reign.*

1. *The eighteenth year.* In ancient times almost every nation had its own calendar, and recorded the dates relating to foreign countries in terms of its own methods of reckoning. Even today we express all ancient dates, originally recorded in various calendars, in terms of our own modern calendar and the B.C. scale of years. In the period of the Hebrew monarchies years were not numbered in a continuous series (as the year 1954 represents the 1954th year of the Christian Era), they were numbered for each king's reign. Thus in Judah the year in which Abijam began to reign was called the 18th of Jeroboam, king of Israel. This is the first of many time statements showing the relationship between the reigns of the two Hebrews kingdoms. It seems evident from these relationships that the books of Kings record any dates connected with the accession of a king of Judah according to the system of reckoning used in Judah, and those concerning a king of Israel by the Israelite system. Since the statement in this verse is a record concerning the reign of a king of Judah, the mention of the 18th year of Jeroboam

in this connection would mean the 18th year of his reign as reckoned in Judah, and not necessarily the 18th year as Jeroboam himself reckoned it (see p. 148).

2. *The daughter.* Probably the granddaughter, for according to 2 Chron. 13:2, the mother of Abijah, there called Michaiah, was the daughter of “Uriel of Gibeah.” The “Abishalom” of this passage also called “Absalom” (2 Chron. 11:20), is in all probability the rebel son of David, whose mother was also named Maachah (2 Sam. 3:3). Absalom had only one daughter, Tamar (2 Sam. 14:27), who probably married Uriel. Of the “eighteen wives, and threescore concubines” of Rehoboam, Maachah was the favorite, and her son Abijah was selected by Rehoboam from his 28 sons for the kingship (2 Chron. 11:21, 22).

3. *Sins of his father.* Although following the idolatrous practices of his father, Abijah set himself up before Israel as the champion of the Jerusalem Temple and the worship of Jehovah, rebuking the Israelites for their worship of the golden calves (2 Chron. 13:4–12).

4. *A lamp.* That is, his posterity. “For David’s sake” refers to the Lord’s promise to David in 2 Sam. 7:12–16.

5. *Matter of Uriah.* This is the only passage where this qualification of the praise of David is found. The reference to Uriah is not found in a number of manuscripts of the LXX.

6. *There was war.* This verse, repeating the statement of ch. 14:30, is lacking in a number of the manuscripts of the LXX.

7. *Between Abijah and Jeroboam.* An account of the war is found in 2 Chron. 13:3–20. The writer of Kings touches lightly on military matters, omitting entirely a number of items described in detail in Chronicles.

10. *His mother’s name was Maachah.* The Jews, in common with Oriental usage, call any male ancestor, however remote, a father, and any female ancestor, a mother (see Gen. 3:20; 10:21; 17:4; 36:43; etc.). Maachah was the mother of Abijah (1 Kings 15:2), and therefore the grandmother of Asa. She is called “queen” (1 Kings 15:13), indicating that she held the honored position of queen mother at the court, and that great deference was still being paid to her.

11. *Which was right.* The reign of Asa was a turning point in the history of Judah. The prophets Azariah and Hanani (2 Chron. 15:1, 2; 16:7) gave guidance and inspiration to the king in his efforts to follow the way of the Lord. The account in Kings gives only a few brief details of this interesting reign, which is reported in much greater detail in Chronicles (2 Chron. 14:1 to 16:14).

12. *He took away.* In this effort to rid the land of sodomites he evidently was not entirely successful, for it was left to his son Jehoshaphat to complete the task (1 Kings 22:46).

13. *Idol.* Heb. *miphleṣeth*. This word occurs only here and in the parallel passage in 2 Chron. 15:16. It implies something horrible and shocking. Probably an obscene image of some particularly monstrous kind is meant. The act of Maachah in making such an idol was regarded as so flagrant that she was removed from her high station in her old age, and the idol was publicly burned.

14. *Not removed.* Asa made an earnest attempt to remove “the altars of the strange gods, and the high places,” and to rid the land of the corrupting shrines (2 Chron. 14:3–5), but in this effort he did not meet with complete success.

15. Brought in. Efforts were being put forth by both Abijah and Asa to replace the Temple treasures that had been taken away by Shishak during the reign of Rehoboam (ch. 14:26).

16. Between Asa and Baasha. During the first ten years of Asa's reign the land was peaceful (2 Chron. 14:1, 6). In his 15th year he gained a great victory over the invading armies of Zerah the Ethiopian (2 Chron. 14:9–15; cf. 2 Chron. 15:10). It was probably after that that hostilities broke out with Baasha of Israel.

17. Built Ramah. Upon Asa's great victory over Zerah, many strangers flocked to him "out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the Lord his God was with him" (2 Chron. 15:9). To prevent his subjects from thus falling away to Asa, Baasha fortified Ramah, a town in Benjamin about 6 mi. (9.6 km.) north of Jerusalem, close to the boundary between Israel and Judah, thus endeavoring to control the border.

18. Ben-hadad. Benhadad I. There was a Benhadad II who was a contemporary of Ahab (ch. 20:1, 34), and a Benhadad III, son of Hazael, who was a contemporary of Jehoash (2 Kings 13:24, 25).

Hezion. Probably the same as, or the father of, Rezon, Solomon's enemy (ch. 11:23). In the short time from Solomon to Asa, Syria must have become a formidable military power. With the Temple treasures, Asa now sought to purchase the aid of Benhadad against Baasha. An interesting stone monument of a king named Benhadad, identified by some with this king, showing his picture and containing an inscription in Aramaic, was found a few years ago.

20. Cities of Israel. The cities smitten were in the north, near the borders of Syria. The site of Ijon was probably in the valley between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, west of Mt. Hermon. Dan was 23 3/4 mi. (38 km.) north of the Sea of Galilee. Abel-beth-maachah was 23 3/4 mi. (38 km.) from Dan, and Cinneroth was on the shore of the Sea of Chinnereth (Galilee). The land of Naphtali, the area in which most of the foregoing cities were situated, was north of the Sea of Galilee. From ch. 20:34 it seems that Syria held these cities at least till the time of Ahab. See Israel's War with Syria in the Days of Baasha and Ahab.

21. Left off building. Asa's policy, though it succeeded in its immediate purpose of getting rid of the threat of Baasha, was hardly wise or proper. Asa should have put his trust once more in the Lord as he had done in the crisis when Zerah the Ethiopian invaded the land (2 Chron. 14:9–15). Regardless of the straits in which he found himself, Asa had no right to employ the treasures from the Lord's Temple to purchase aid from a heathen king. For this matter he was rebuked by the prophet Hanani, but became angry and placed the prophet in prison (2 Chron. 16:7–10). Isaiah later uttered a similar rebuke to Israel because of reliance on Egypt rather than God (Isa. 30:1–17).

22. Built with them. Asa had followed a vigorous military policy, building fortified posts where they might be needed, and making "walls, and towers, gates, and bars" (2 Chron. 14:6, 7). After Baasha had left off his efforts at Ramah, the modern *er-Râm*, in Benjamin, Asa selected a stronger site 1 3/4 mi. (2.8 km.) east of it, Geba, modern *Jeba'*, which stood at the top of a terraced hill, overlooking the valley to the north, and another site, Mizpah, identified by some with *Tell en-Naşbeh*, 3 1/2 mi. (5.6 km.) northwest of it. The materials collected by Baasha for fortifying Ramah were employed by Asa to fortify

Geba and Mizpah. Mizpah must have been a strong and important place, for it was chosen by Gedaliah, governor of Judah appointed by Nebuchadnezzar, as the headquarters from which he commanded the highway from Shechem and Samaria to Jerusalem (Jer. 41:1–5).

23. The acts of Asa. Some of these are recorded in Chronicles. The most important are his war with Zerah the Ethiopian, his celebration of a great festival in Jerusalem in his 15th year, his imprisonment of Hanani the seer, his oppression of some of the people, and the going in his final illness, not to the Lord, but the physicians.

Old age. According to 2 Chron. 16:12, this was in the 39th year of his reign.

24. Jehoshaphat. According to the system of chronology adopted for use in this commentary, Jehoshaphat reigned with Asa for a period before his father's death. Evidently Asa's declining health caused him to associate his son with him on the throne to assist in carrying the responsibilities of state.

25. The second year. According to Israelite reckoning, but the first according to Asa's own reckoning (see on v. 1). The chronological data of the kings introducing the accounts of their reigns are, generally speaking, arranged in accord with the sequence of their accessions to the throne. This is why the reign of Nadab is now introduced after that of Asa, rather than the reign of Jehoshaphat, Asa's successor. Thus far we have had the following:

1 Kings 15:1, 2	
Abijam in Judah	18th year of Jeroboam
1 Kings 15:9, 10	
Asa in Judah	20th year of Jeroboam
1 Kings 15:25	
Nadab in Israel	2d year of Asa

The remaining reigns recorded in 1 Kings occur in the following order:

1 Kings 15:28, 33	
Baasha in Israel	3d year of Asa
1 Kings 16:8	
Elah in Israel	26th year of Asa
1 Kings 16:10	
Zimri in Israel	27th year of Asa
1 Kings 16:23	
Omri in Israel	31st year of Asa
1 Kings 16:29	
Ahab in Israel	38th year of Asa
1 Kings 22:41, 42	
Jehoshaphat in Judah	4th year of Ahab
1 Kings 22:51	
Ahaziah in Israel	17th year of Jehoshaphat

It will be noticed that all these reigns are arranged in a perfect order of chronological sequence. Thus Jehoshaphat is not introduced until Ahab's reign has been given, since it was in the 4th year of Ahab that Jehoshaphat began to rule, and Ahaziah is not introduced till after Jehoshaphat, since it was in the 17th year of Jehoshaphat that Ahaziah began his

reign. This shows how the books of Kings are built around a framework of chronological data.

26. *He did evil.* This is the sole item that is left on record concerning Nadab's reign.

27. *Of Issachar.* Baasha sprang from an obscure tribe, hardly distinguished at any time in Hebrew history.

Gibbethon. This was a Levitical town in the territory originally assigned to Dan (Joshua 19:44; 21:23). It was in the Shephelah (see on Joshua 19:44). Many towns in this border area frequently changed hands between the Hebrews and the Philistines. The town was now in the hands of the Philistines, and 24 years later it was still held by them (1 Kings 16:15).

28. *Third year of Asa.* Nadab began his reign in the second year of Asa (v. 25) and was slain by Baasha in the third year of Asa, after a reign of two years (v. 25). This was possible because Nadab's reign was reckoned according to a system in which Jeroboam's last year was also reckoned as Nadab's first year, and any part of the following regnal year in which Nadab reigned was considered his second year. Seeing he reigned during parts of the two regnal years, he would be said to reign two years (see p. 137; also PK 109).

29. *Smote all the house.* See on ch. 16:12. Baasha did this for his own security, thus fulfilling Ahijah's prophecy (ch. 14:7–11).

33. *Tirzah.* This city, which had been the capital of Jeroboam (ch. 14:17), continued to be the capital of Israel under the house of Baasha, and down to the reign of Omri (ch. 16:23). It was once a royal Canaanite city (Joshua 12:24), and was famous for its beauty, like Jerusalem (S. of Sol. 6:4).

Twenty and four years. That is, 24 years, inclusive (see on v. 28), for he began his reign in the 3d year of Asa and continued upon the throne until Asa's 26th year (ch. 16:8).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

11 PK 110, 190

16–24PK 113

29, 30 PK 109

CHAPTER 16

1, 7 *Jehu's prophecy against Baasha.* 6 *Elah succeedeth him.* 8 *Zimri conspiring against Elah succeedeth him.* 11 *Zimri executeth Jehu's prophecy.* 15 *Omri, made king by the soldiers, forceth Zimri desperately to burn himself.* 21 *The kingdom being divided, Omri prevaieth against Tibni.* 23 *Omri buildeth Samaria.* 25 *His wicked reign.* 27 *Ahab succeedeth him.* 29 *Ahab's most wicked reign.* 34 *Joshua's curse upon Hiel the builder of Jericho.*

1. *Son of Hanani.* Hanani was prophet to Asa in the kingdom of Judah (2 Chron. 16:7–10). His son Jehu now is sent by the Lord with a message to Baasha of Israel. He must have been young at this time, for he is found rebuking Jehoshaphat after the death of Ahab (2 Chron. 19:2), and writing the annals of Jehoshaphat's reign (2 Chron. 20:34).

2. *Israel to sin.* This message of rebuke to Baasha is similar to Ahijah's message to Jeroboam (ch. 14:7–11). Here the expression "out of the dust," which does not occur in ch. 14:7, seems to imply that Baasha had none of those antecedents of rank, wealth, etc., which in some measure fitted Jeroboam for his high office, but that Baasha was taken from the humblest ranks of the people.

3. *Make thy house.* Baasha had been the instrument to wipe out the house of Jeroboam. It should thus have been particularly clear to him what a terrible fate was in store for himself if he followed in Jeroboam's footsteps. Repentance might have averted in a measure the terrible doom. God's messages of judgment are frequently warnings of the irrevocable fate that will befall the transgressor if he persists in his course. God desires to save, not destroy.

5. *Rest of the acts.* Baasha ruled 24 years, and there were no doubt many items of interest in the official annals that could have been selected to give a comprehensive account of his reign. But all that the writer of Kings passes by, referring the reader to the fact that those things are already written in the "book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel." The thing that concerns him most is the position taken by each ruler in regard to Jehovah and His purpose for Israel, and the bearing that that would have upon the national history of God's chosen people. Would the nation prosper or decline, would it endure forever or would it go down in ruin? The answer to those questions depended upon the attitude of king and people toward God.

7. *Of the prophet.* This verse at first glance may seem to be out of place. The official record of Baasha's reign has been concluded by the announcement in the preceding verse of his death and burial, and the accession of his son. But now the account goes back again to Baasha's reign, referring once more to the message of Jehu against Baasha and his house. This additional statement was probably made for the purpose of driving home the particular heinousness of Baasha's offense.

Like the house of Jeroboam. Baasha had wiped out the house of Jeroboam, yet he himself was no better. He walked in the same wicked ways that had caused the punishment to be meted out against the house he overthrew.

8. *Two years.* Two years inclusive. Elah began to reign in the 26th year of Asa and terminated his reign in Asa's 27th year (v. 10; see on ch. 15:28).

9. *Conspired.* This shows the low moral level to which Israel had sunk. Zimri held a high position of trust in the army of Elah, but proved unfaithful, and turned against the king, whose throne it was his responsibility to uphold. Self-interest prevailed, and another assassination of a king appears in the record. There can be no peace or security, no tranquillity or safety, where king and people trample underfoot the law of God and refuse to have their lives molded according to the divine image.

Drinking himself drunk. Drunkenness is an evil that helps bring nations to ruin. When rulers give themselves to wine, they neglect the affairs of state, and the nation suffers. "It is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted" (Prov. 31:4, 5).

11. *His friends.* These words indicate measures of unusual severity. Not only were all members of the royal family extirpated, but all friends as well, including, probably, the counselors and officers of state. It is not surprising that the nation did not take kindly to such a king, particularly not Omri, who, as an army officer in the service of the former king, would have reason to fear for his own safety. Those who endanger others endanger themselves.

12. *According to.* Frequently the predictions of the prophets have the character of simple forecasts rather than divine decrees; God does not decree all the events He predicts. At other times the utterances of the prophets are pronouncements of judgment. It was the prerogative of God to assign the punishment to be meted out upon an evil ruler.

The penalty was death where the wickedness merited it. In carrying out the intent of the judgment, the executioners of the divine decree were acting as agents of Heaven (see 2 Kings 9:7). Frequently, however, they served selfish ends, and acted from motives that were entirely vindictive. To the degree that they acted from such motives they incurred guilt. Thus the Assyrians, who executed God's judgment, were later punished for the selfish and cruel motives that prompted their course (Isa. 10:5–13). Zimri probably went beyond the original intent of the judgment proclaimed against the "house of Baasha," and slew many who were not worthy of destruction.

13. Their vanities. That is, their worship of idols (see Deut. 32:16, 21; 1 Sam. 12:10, 21; Jer. 8:19). Few things are quite so foolish as for men to make gods for themselves with their own hands and then bow before them in worship. The folly of such a course is repeatedly made plain in the Word of God (Ps. 115:4–8; Isa. 41:21–29; 44:9–20; Jer. 10:3–8).

15. Seven days. Reigns of less than a year in length are often given in terms of days or months (2 Kings 15:8, 13; 23:31; 24:8; 2 Chron. 36:2, 9).

Against Gibbethon. Twenty-four years before, Baasha had smitten Nadab while he was fighting against Gibbethon (ch. 15:27).

16. Omri. While Elah was drinking himself drunk at the house of his steward in Tirzah, he was slain by Zimri (v. 9), and as soon as the word reached the army at Gibbethon, they made Omri king. This incident recalls the favorite practice of the Roman armies, which, when they received word of the assassination of an emperor at Rome, were wont to invest their own commander with the purple.

18. The city was taken. The siege of Tirzah must have been short, for the entire reign of Zimri was only seven days (v. 15). Omri doubtless had help from within the city, since he was able to capture it almost immediately.

Into the palace. Probably into the strongest point of the palace, the citadel. His setting fire to the palace and perishing in the flames has a number of parallels in Eastern history.

For his sins. Zimri reigned over Israel only seven days, yet he receives the same condemnation as did kings with the longest reigns. His death goes to illustrate the moral that the writer of Kings draws from the whole history of the Israelite monarchs, that a curse was upon them and the nation for their persistence in Jeroboam's sin, which eventually brought each royal house to an ignominious and bloody end.

21. Divided. The death of Zimri left Israel with two kings, each ruling over half of the nation. Since Zimri began his short reign of seven days in the 27th year of Asa (vs. 10, 15), and since Tibni and Omri began their reigns at that time, both began to reign in Asa's 27th year.

22. Tibni died. We are not told how Tibni ruled or how he died, but there is an ominous significance in the terse statement that he died and that Omri reigned. Evidently there was a constant struggle between the two, which did not end till Omri had eliminated his rival.

23. The thirty and first year. This evidently indicates the time when Omri began his sole reign. He was first made king in the 27th year of Asa (vs. 15, 16). Five years later, inclusive reckoning (the 31st year of Asa), he began his reign.

Twelve years. This period has brought much difficulty to Biblical chronologists, yet it is comparatively simple. These 12 years cover the entire reign of Omri, not only the

period of his undisputed rule, but also the period when Tibni ruled part of the land. Thus the years of Omri began in the 27th year of Asa, when the people made Omri king (vs. 15, 16), and terminated in Asa's 38th year, when Omri was succeeded by his son Ahab (v. 29), a period of 12 years, inclusive reckoning (see p. 136).

Six years. From the period when he began his reign, till shortly after the death of Tibni. For a year after the death of his rival, Tirzah continued to be Omri's capital.

24. The hill Samaria. The accession of Omri marked a new period of settled government and prosperity for the northern kingdom. While the capital was at Tirzah, the nation had gone through a long period of dissension and unrest. Possibly seeds of disaffection still lurked at Tirzah, causing Omri to decide upon a new site for his capital. The hill of Samaria, 7 1/4 mi. (11.6 km.) northwest of Shechem, was the site selected. It would have been difficult to find a more perfect spot for the nation's capital. Its position was one of great beauty, commanding a view of the sea and of the country for miles around. It was situated at the heart of the land. Militarily, the hill, with its steep sides, was admirably adapted to defense, as is shown by the long sieges it endured (1 Kings 20:1; 2 Kings 6:24; 17:5; 18:9, 10). The country round about was singularly productive. On the hill were abundant springs of water. Its history vindicated the sagacity of its founder, for Samaria continued as the capital of Israel till the close of the nation's history. Excavations at the ancient site of Samaria date the lowest levels of the city to Omri's day.

25. Did worse. From a worldly standpoint Omri was a successful ruler. He did a great deal to bring peace and prosperity to his troubled land. His name occurs on the famous Moabite Stone, which records Omri's occupation of Moab (see Additional Note on 2 Kings 3). Israel came to be known to the Assyrians as "the land of Omri," while even Jehu, the extirpator of the house of Omri, is termed a "son of Omri". But in the Lord's sight Omri did worse than all the evil kings before him. In addition to an acceptance of the old idolatry, he probably went further, and introduced and encouraged the worship of the Sidonian Baal. The "statutes of Omri" are referred to by Micah (Micah 6:16), in connection with the "works of the house of Ahab," as symbols of hardened and hopeless apostasy.

31. Jezebel. The name of Jezebel was to become proverbial for wickedness. Ethbaal, her father, was high priest of Baal (PK 114). Josephus calls him the priest of Astarte, who slew Pheles, king of Tyre, and founded a new dynasty and reigned over Tyre for 32 years (*Against Apion*. 1. 18). Jezebel's priestly origin may account for the queen's fanatical devotion to spreading false religion in Israel.

King of the Sidonians. Tyre was at this time the leading city of Phoenicia (see on Gen. 10:15), but the historic reputation of Sidon led the kings of Tyre to adopt the title "king of the Sidonians." A dedication bowl found on the island of Cyprus bears this very inscription.

Baal. Literally, "lord." The name refers to the great storm god, and to the many local fertility gods who were worshiped as the productive principle in nature. Ahab now promoted a corrupt religion.

32. The house of Baal. No remains of this temple have been found, but it may have been part of Ahab's splendid palace that has been excavated.

33. A grove. See on Judges 3:7; 1 Kings 14:15. Baal was often associated with the goddess Asherah (Judges 2:13), and in the vicinity of his altar there was often a grove (see Judges 6:25, 30), a tree stump representing the goddess Asherah.

34. Build Jericho. See on Joshua 6:26. Jericho was now rebuilt and again became a place of considerable importance. It had great natural advantages, being well watered, and commanded the highway from the valley of the Jordan to the high ground of Bethel. It was now rebuilt by a Bethelite, probably under the patronage of Ahab.

In Abiram. See PK 230. Some understand this text to refer to the human sacrifices that were so brutal a part of the corrupt religion of the times. On this understanding, the first-born would be offered as a foundation sacrifice, and the youngest as its inaugural counterpart.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

25 PK 114
29–33PK 114, 177
30–333T 262
34 PK 230; 3T 273
4

CHAPTER 17

1 *Elijah, having prophesied against Ahab, is sent to Cherith, where the ravens feed him. 8 He is sent to the widow of Zarephath. 17 He raiseth the widow's son. 24 The woman believeth him.*

1. Elijah. Here begins a new section of Kings, entirely different in spirit from that which has gone before. Instead of a few cold facts concerning the evil reigns of the kings, we now find a recital of some of the most stirring deeds of the greatest of prophets. The stories are detailed and graphic, full of spiritual beauty and moral instruction. Elijah appears on the scene as a man with an urgent errand for God. The hour is one of crisis. Sin has invaded the land, and if not stopped, will soon engulf all in tragic ruin. Elijah meets the foe as a valiant warrior for God, bearing witness for Him by word and deed, living the life of a recluse, or standing boldly on the heights of Carmel, calling down fire from heaven, and wielding the sword of vengeance in the slaughter of the prophets of Baal. As the gripping tale unfolds its account of courage, faith, amazing fidelity, kindly affection, or earnest zeal in service for God, it is impossible not to see in the prophet a type of the greater Elias who was yet to come (Matt. 17:10–12). The name Elijah well suited the prophet for his mission. It means “Jehovah is my God.”

Of Gilead. The home of Elijah was in Gilead, east of the Jordan. The exact location of the town of his origin is unknown.

Said unto Ahab. The story of Elijah is introduced with dramatic abruptness. There is no introduction, nothing concerning the prophet's call, nothing concerning the prophet's call, nothing concerning his early experiences. He is mentioned by name as one of the inhabitants of Gilead, and then he stands before the king delivering his solemn message of judgment to come. In the solitude of the mountains of Gilead the heart of Elijah had been deeply moved as he thought of the ever-increasing tide of apostasy that was flooding the land. His soul was distressed and his indignation aroused, and he prayed most earnestly that something might happen to stay the tide of evil—that if necessary, judgments might come to bring the people to their senses and help them to see the folly

⁴Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (1 Ki 8:53). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

of trusting in Baal. His prayer was heard, and Elijah was himself sent to the king with his startling message of judgment to come (see PK 119, 120).

Dew nor rain. Baal was worshiped as the source of life and blessing, as the great storm god, who supplied the earth with moisture, and gave to the land its increase. Now Israel was to learn that Baal could not provide these blessings.

3. Get thee hence. There was no time to lose. Before the king could recover his senses to lay hold on the prophet and have him put to death, he was gone. The Lord instructed him to make his way to the valley of the Jordan, by the brook Cherith. The exact location is not known, but was probably in some quiet ravine, far removed from the busy thoroughfares of men.

4. The ravens. The times were strange and the hearts of men were hard. If anything good was to be accomplished, God must manifest Himself in ways most unusual. Whatever means it might take, however long the time, God would demonstrate the fact before the nation that He was God and that He would take care of His own.

7. Dried up. Elijah's word to the king had gone into immediate effect. From the moment the words were uttered, there was no rain, and the whole land was becoming parched and seared. King and people refused to believe that the drought was a judgment from God. They insisted that Baal and Ashtoreth would yet give them the life-giving rain. Then the brook Cherith itself dried up.

9. Zarephath. A coastal town in Phoenicia, 9 mi. (14.4 km.) south-southwest of Sidon, and 13 1/2 mi. (21.6 km.) north-northeast of Tyre. To this city, within the very heart of the country ruled by the kings of Baal, Elijah was sent to be sustained by a widow who was not an Israelite. Certainly Ahab would never search for him there.

Zarephath is a small village known today as *Şarafand*.

10. Gathering of sticks. This is one of the commonest of scenes in Oriental lands, where fuel is scarce. Women and children search everywhere for a few sticks or bits of grass that can be used to kindle a fire.

11. A morsel of bread. It was the Lord who prompted the prophet to make this request for bread. He knew exactly the situation that prevailed—the dire poverty of the widow and the prophet's need for bread. Being in such desperate need herself, would the widow feel she was able to deny her own son in order to give to a stranger from another land?

13. Make me thereof. The request was a test of faith. The widow had just explained her own financial straits. Her meager store was almost gone—only enough left for one last pitiful meal, and then starvation.

14. Thus saith the Lord. The request was accompanied by a promise. She was told of the blessings that her giving would bring. God made clear to her that if she gave to the prophet, He would return to her far more than she had given. She met the test and was richly rewarded.

15. Eat many days. She ate because she believed the promise of God. Thousands about her, those who trusted in Baal, were starving. When the call came to give, she had only enough left for one last meal for herself and son. But when she had given, she had enough for herself and all her house, and for the prophet as well, for many days. She found life and blessing because of her faith. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth" (Prov. 11:24).

16. Wasted not. God's store never becomes bare. The Lord is the source of all blessings. Those who learn to rely on Him will find even in this life a fullness of joy and blessing that despisers of His grace can never know (see Matt. 6:25, 33).

17. Fell sick. The widow had every evidence of God's presence and blessing, and yet her son was stricken. Sorrow and death come to the homes of the righteous as well as the wicked. However diligent and devoted one may be in the service of the Lord, suffering and affliction, disappointment and bereavement, may still be the lot.

18. Man of God. The words indicate the woman's belief in God and in Elijah as His prophet. It is a remarkable expression of faith from the mouth of a woman of Phoenicia. Even before the arrival of Elijah she had been "a believer in the true God, and had walked in all the light that was shining on her pathway" (PK 129). At an hour when Israel was turning away from God to the worship of Baal, a woman of the country of Baal was demonstrating her faith in the God of Israel. Seed sown in the most unlikely places may spring forth to produce its harvest of grace.

To remembrance. The words express the unreasonableness of the sorrowing heart. The visit of Elijah had brought to the widow life, not death, and joy, not sorrow. In her affliction she associated her trouble with the prophet and God, and felt that judgment was being meted out of her because of some sin in her life. The presence of the prophet had brought to her a keener sense of sin, and she now looked upon her sorrow as a punishment from God.

20. Cried unto the Lord. An example of how, in the presence of death, God's own may cry unto Him. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

21. Stretched himself. This does not mean that the prophet was resorting to some natural means of reviving the dead. Only God, who gave life, can restore life. Elijah prayed earnestly to God that He would bring the child back to life.

Soul. Heb. *nephesh*. This Hebrew word occurs more than 700 times in the OT and has been variously translated "soul" (Gen. 2:7; 12:5, 12; etc.), "creature" (Gen. 1:21, 24; 2:19; Lev. 11:46; etc.), "person" (Gen. 14:21; Joshua 20:9; Jer. 43:6; etc.), "life" (Gen. 9:4; Ex. 4:19; Joshua 2:14; etc.), "dead" (Lev. 19:28; Num. 9:6, 7, 10; etc.), "self" (Lev. 11:43; 1 Kings 19:4; Isa. 46:2; etc.), and a number of other ways. Of all the various renderings, the translation "life" would probably be the most suitable in the text under consideration. The translation "soul" is misleading and conveys to many the idea of an immortal entity, capable of a conscious existence separate from the body. This idea is not resident in the word *nephesh*. In all of the more than 700 occurrences of the word, never once is such an idea attached to it or even implied. Not once is a *nephesh* called immortal. To translation *nephesh* "life" is in harmony with what the translators of our Bible have done in 119 other instances. A notable example is 1 Kings 19:4, in which Elijah declares: "O Lord, take away my life [Heb. *nephesh*]." Here the translators have correctly employed the word "life." For a further discussion of the problem see on Gen. 35:18.

22. He revived. Through the prayer of faith, "women received their dead raised to life again" (Heb. 11:35). This miracle was performed at an hour of crisis in the history of Israel and of the world. Faith in God was at a low ebb. Men looked to the forces of nature

as the source of life and healing. They needed to have their attention directed to God, and to learn that it is He who gives life, and that it was in His power not only to heal the sick but to raise the dead. News of such a miracle could not be kept silent. Here was something that Baal could never do. As men learned that, through the power of God, the son of the widow had been raised from the dead, the power of Baal began to be broken.

23. *Thy son liveth.* How many a mother's aching heart has longed to hear words like these! But the same glad words that were heard then, many mothers, if faithful, will hear in the near hereafter. What unexpected blessings and favors had come to the widow of Zarephath as a result of her faith and hospitality! She had shared her last meal with the prophet, and had given him a place in her humble home. As a return her child was restored to life. "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward" (Matt. 10:41; see also Isa. 58:10, 11).

24 *By this I know.* The widow had had a most unusual confirmation of the reliability of the word of the Lord. God had promised, and He had done to her according to His promise. The Lord's promises are always sure. It is well for every child of God to hold fast the profession of his faith without wavering, "for he is faithful that promised" (Heb. 10:23). Even though the Lord may perform no miracles for us as He did for the Phoenician widow, there are thousands of ways by which every child of His may know that God's Word is truth. God is as good, as powerful, as close to us today as He was to the widow of Zarephath, and as interested in supplying our every need (see Matt. 6:25–34).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–24PK 119–132

1 EW 162; PK 116, 121; 3T 263, 273

3, 4 PK 122

3–63T 288

4 MH 202

6 EW 56; 4T 253

7–93T 288

9 AA 416, 430; DA 238; 3T 274

9–11PK 129

9–162T 29

12–14PK 130

12–156T 345

15–24PK 131; 6T 346

CHAPTER 18

1 *In the extremity of famine Elijah, sent to Ahab, meeteth good Obadiah. 9 Obadiah bringeth Ahab to Elijah. 17 Elijah, reproving Ahab, by fire from heaven convinceth Baal's prophets. 41 Elijah, by prayer obtaining rain, followeth Ahab to Jezreel.*

1. *The third year.* The period of drought was three years, but the interval since the preceding rain was six months longer (Luke 4:25; James 5:17). For the normal dry season (May–October) see p. 110.

Shew thyself. The king had been searching everywhere for Elijah, but to no avail. Now the prophet was commanded to go and reveal himself to the king. The interdict had been placed upon the land by Elijah's direct announcement to Ahab as to what the Lord would do. It was fitting that it should be removed in the same way. Neither King nor

people would be allowed any excuse for attributing the end of the drought to the power of their gods or prophets.

2. *Elijah went.* Elijah knew that his life would be in danger, but when he received the command from the Lord to show himself to Ahab, he immediately obeyed, and trusted in God to protect him.

3. *Obadiah.* The name means “servant of Jehovah.” The character of the man was in keeping with the meaning of his name. It is significant that the king would keep a man in so important an office whom he knew to be a servant of the Lord. But Ahab knew that this man who was faithful to God would also be faithful in administering the affairs of the royal household.

4. *Jezebel cut off.* Not until here is the picture given us of the severity of the persecution against God’s people, and who was its leading spirit. Queen Jezebel, enraged over Elijah’s message shutting up the heavens that they might not rain, was determined that the prophet and all who associated themselves with him in the service of Jehovah should be slain. Indeed, quite apart from the famine, Jezebel’s devotion to Baal would make her hostile to the prophets of God.

An hundred prophets. The prophets here mentioned were evidently members of the schools of the prophets. They were a group of prophet scholars and prophet preachers who were originally trained under the prophets and dedicated their lives to a promulgation of the message of righteous and holy living. The fact that 100 of them were hid by Obadiah shows that they must have been quite numerous even in Israel, which for so long a period had been going contrary to the ways of the Lord.

In a cave. Caves were common in Palestine. In the Mt. Carmel region alone over 2,000 caves have been counted. Caves in Palestine were both natural and man made, and served as homes, tombs, storehouses, cisterns, or stables for cattle. In times of war and oppression they afforded excellent places of refuge (Joshua 10:16–27; Judges 6:2; 1 Sam. 13:6; 22:1; 24:3–10; 2 Sam. 23:13).

5. *Fountains.* Palestine is famous for its springs and fountains, welling up from under a rock or bank, or from the ground. They are the permanent source of many streams and rivers. Evidently long after the usual rivers had gone dry, some streams fed by springs drawing their water from the snows of the Lebanon Mts. continued to flow throughout the hot dry season, when there was no rain.

6. *Divided the land.* This personal inspection of the land by the king and one of his chief officers marks the extreme straits to which Israel had been reduced by the drought.

7. *Art thou that my lord Elijah?* Perhaps it would be better to translate “Is it thou, in person, my lord Elijah?” or, “Art thou here, my lord Elijah?” Obadiah’s humility in the presence of the prophet is striking. It is born of reverence for God. Obadiah was one of the chief officers of the realm, but he recognizes himself as a servant or slave (see vs. 9, 12) before the messenger of the Lord. The question was asked not for information but from surprise. “Are you here, when the king has been seeking you all these years, throughout the land?”

8. *Tell thy lord.* Elijah was bidden by the Lord to go and show himself to Ahab. Now he had met Obadiah, but he does not accompany Obadiah to the king. On the contrary, Obadiah is to announce the prophet’s presence to Ahab, and the king may, if he so desires, go out to the prophet. The true relationship between people is not always

indicated by the titles or official positions they hold. Servant or slave frequently stands much higher as concerns real greatness or superiority than king or lord.

10. *No nation or kingdom.* There were many small kingdoms not far distant from Israel. It would be natural for someone whose life was hunted to seek exile in some nearby state. Ahab not only searched his own land but had inquiry made for Elijah in all the neighboring countries.

12. *Shall carry thee.* Obadiah had every confidence in God to take care of His servant Elijah. He was fearful that the “Spirit of the Lord” would sweep Elijah away from harm to some hidden refuge, before the contact with Ahab was made.

14. *Now thou sayest.* Obadiah had no desire to bring about the death of Elijah, which he was certain would be the prophet’s fate if he took him to the king. But if he did not deliver Elijah to Ahab, he was certain that he himself would die. Did Elijah wish to bring about the death of a man who had saved the lives of 100 prophets?

15. *Surely shew myself.* Elijah had his commission from God and, inconceivable though this might be to Obadiah, Elijah was prepared to meet Ahab that very day.

16. *Ahab went.* The king went to the prophet, not the prophet to the king. Ahab realized that Elijah gave his first allegiance and service to One higher than an earthly king, and thus the king was forced to make his way to the man whose life he sought. He knew full well that the prophet had not agreed to this strange meeting to surrender himself into the hands of the king. King rather than prophet faced the meeting with fear, even though the king was accompanied with a strong bodyguard of soldiers and the prophet had only the defense of God.

17. *That troubleth Israel.* Israel had been sorely troubled, and in his inmost soul Ahab understood the reason why. But guilt always tries to shirk the responsibility for the evil it brings. Ahab sought to place the blame upon Elijah for the curse that had smitten the land. One of the greatest evils of sin is that it always seeks to confuse the issue. It refuses to bear the blame for the troubles it causes, and tries even to make it appear that righteousness rather than iniquity is responsible for man’s woe.

18. *But thou.* The king has met his master. The humble cloak of the prophet carries greater authority than the royal robe. It is Elijah who sits in the seat of judgment, while the king is the culprit standing at the bar. As Elijah fearlessly tells him that it is he who has troubled Israel, the king quails before the words of merited rebuke.

Forsaken the commandments. The king and all within the realm need to know that it is their disobedience to the commandments of God that has brought the sore judgments upon themselves and their unhappy land. Serving Baal has been following the pathway of a fool’s paradise. Seeking life, they found death; seeking joy, they found sorrow and woe; seeking peace and prosperity, they found trouble and ruin.

19. *Gather to me.* It is the prophet, not the king, who gives the orders. Ahab recognized the divine origin of the command, and obeyed at once.

Mount Carmel. A range of hills 15 mi. (9.3 km.) long, with its northwestern promontory jutting out into the Mediterranean. The hills are about 550 ft. (167.7 m.) high at the promontory and about 1,700 ft. (518.3 m.) high at the southeast. The height affords a beautiful view of the Mediterranean, the plains of Esdraelon and Sharon, and of much of Samaria.

Prophets of Baal. These were the priests and teachers of Baal, and the prophets of the groves were the priests connected with the worship of Astarte. The number gives an idea of the extent to which these degrading cults had taken hold of the people of Israel.

Eat at Jezebel's table. That is, they received their support from the hands of the queen. They were Jezebel's subsidized clergy.

20. *Ahab sent.* In harmony with Elijah's directions, Ahab sent forth a call for all Israel to gather at Carmel, together with the prophets of Baal and Astarte. The people came with strange forebodings. Mt. Carmel, once a place of great scenic beauty, with its idol temples in flourishing groves, was now a place of desolation. Trees stood gaunt and bare, springs were dry, and flowers were no more. The gods of fertility had sadly failed their worshipers, and they had failed themselves. Their own shrines were places of vexation and dishonor. Here on these grounds consecrated to pagan shrines, once so beautiful, now so barren and forlorn, Elijah proposed to demonstrate the utter folly of the worship of Baal.

21. *How long halt ye?* The people of Israel stood at the crossroads. Would they reject forever the God who had established them as a separate people, and accept Baal as their master and lord? If Jehovah was God, He was the one who should be worshiped. If Baal was God, they should follow him. The challenge was presented, and the people were given an opportunity to express themselves.

24. *Answereth by fire.* The test that Elijah proposed was entirely fair. The issue at stake was, Who was God, Jehovah or Baal? If Baal was what the pagan priests claimed him to be, then let him demonstrate that fact by bringing forth fire from heaven. If he has, indeed, the power of the rain and the storm, let him send forth his lightning bolts. Even the priests of Baal could not deny the fairness of the offer made, though they must have feared the results.

26. *No voice.* How could there be? Baal was nothing but a product of man's imagination, and he could not answer prayer.

They leaped. The meaning is, they "leaped up and down," as in the margin. This was a wild ritual dance, in which they worked themselves up into a state of frenzy. Such exhibitions are said at times to have been accompanied by manifestations of demoniacal power, and undoubtedly it was hoped that by such means fire might be secured. But the Lord intervened. Satan and his angels were held in leash, and no fire appeared.

27. *Elijah mocked them.* These priests of Baal needed to learn that their god could not answer their prayers. Elijah's words to them were expressions of supreme contempt. His scornful ridicule was not lost on the spectators, who were there to make their decision between Jehovah and Baal.

28. *Cut themselves.* Self-mutilation, common in Oriental frenzy, was resorted to under the notion that the gods delight in the shedding of blood. Such bloody rites in cases of extreme heathen propitiation were not unusual in OT times (Jer. 16:6, 7), but they were forbidden to God's people (Lev. 19:28; Deut. 14:1).

29. *They prophesied.* These agents of Baal were called prophets (v. 19). The performance of their service as a whole may have been considered an act of prophesying. Or probably in a more restricted sense they prophesied as did Saul, who "prophesied in the midst of the house" when an evil spirit came upon him (1 Sam. 18:10). Saul's experience may have been like that of devil worshipers in Oriental lands today, who are said sometimes to work themselves up to a high state of religious frenzy, when they give

utterance to unintelligible noises and grunts. Satan and his angels were present at Carmel and would have done anything within their power to bring down the desired fire had this been permitted by God. But the Lord, although allowing the demons to exhibit some of the more revolting aspects of their presence in men, did not allow Satan to bring down fire in the name of Baal.

30. *Repaired the altar.* In ancient times men had at this altar worshiped the God of heaven, but for a long time it had not been used. Reverently Elijah brought together the scattered stones. There are many homes today in which the altar of God has been broken down. It is time that a work be done similar to that upon Carmel. At evening God's children should reverently come together at the family altar for a period of quiet devotion. In the morning families should again unite in a season of prayer. The altar of prayer and devotion should be kept in constant repair.

33. *With water.* A perennial spring, which is never known to have failed even in the severest drought, is said to be in the neighborhood of the traditional scene of the sacrifice. By directing that water be poured on the sacrifice and wood, Elijah would preclude all suspicion of fraud.

36. *Evening sacrifice.* For long and noisy hours the priests of Baal had gone through their violent and excited leapings and screamings, praying wildly, muttering incoherently, but with no results. Utterly wearied and exhausted, they at length retired in despair. The multitude too were tired of the scenes of horror and excitement, and were in a receptive frame of mind for the ministrations of the prophet of God.

Of Abraham. Elijah addresses the God who is the Father of them all. He speaks to Him quietly and reverently, in striking contrast to the frenzied shrieks of the prophets of Baal.

Let it be known. The prayer was utterly simple, utterly sincere, without excitement, straight to the point, and right from the heart.

37. *Turned their heart.* The great burden on Elijah's heart was the conversion of Israel—that their hearts which had turned to Baal might be turned back to God.

38. *Then the fire.* With startling suddenness, like a great flashing of lightning, fire came down and consumed the sacrifice, and even the stones of the altar. Never before had such a flash been seen by the assembled host. It was visible to all about, even to the multitude gathered at the foot of the hill. The people recognized it as the consuming fire of God.

39. *The Lord, he is the God.* Hearts so shortly before devoted to Baal were now turned back to the Lord as the great God of heaven and earth. With one accord the multitude raised a shout and acknowledged Jehovah as Lord.

40. *Take the prophets of Baal.* Elijah will not have the people's zeal waste itself in mere words. He requires that they show their conversion and conviction by deeds—deeds which might bring upon them the wrath of the unholy queen, but which, once committed, will make a break between them and the cause of Baal. As a result of the wonderful manifestations of that day the multitude had acknowledged the fact that Jehovah is God—all except the priests of Baal, who had refused to repent. Elijah's summary execution of these priests was a fearful vengeance, but it was necessary and showed God's indignation against those who persist in rebellion, and who are willing to corrupt and demoralize an entire people for selfish ends. The sentence against them served both

as an example and a warning. God is not to be trifled with, and a terrible retribution awaits all who will sell their souls for the corruption of the world.

41. *Elijah said.* Elijah was in complete command of the situation. It was he who commanded the people, and it was he who directed the king.

There is a sound. The sound was not in the prophet's ears but in his heart. By faith he knew that rain was about to fall. The repentance of the people had removed the cause for judgment, and Elijah perceived that the longed-for showers were consequently due to fall. Elijah lived a life of faith and a life of prayer. When God sent him to announce the drought, he knew that it would be even according to the word of the Lord. The same Spirit that had placed in his mouth the one prediction, now gave to him the other.

42. *Elijah went up.* While Ahab went to feast, Elijah went to pray. His prayer was one of intercession in behalf of penitent Israel. He knew that the rain would come, but it was his concern that the conditions for receiving the heavenly blessing be fully met, and that the results of the reformation might be permanent.

God has promised His people showers of heavenly blessing with the sending of the Holy Spirit at the time of the latter rain. Are the saints today praying as did Elijah, or are they feasting as did Ahab? When, and only when, God's people are intensely in earnest, when they are willing to pray as did Elijah, and make their chief concern the fulfilling of the necessary conditions, then the latter rain will fall.

43. *Go again.* The rain did not immediately fall. But Elijah's faith did not waver. He continued to pray more earnestly than before. Again and again the servant was sent, and still the heavens were as brass, and the earth as powder and dust. Yet Elijah's intercession did not cease. This earnest prayer of the prophet became proverbial for intensity and perseverance in supplication (James 5:18).

44. *A little cloud.* This cloud was to Elijah the token of divine favor. He ceased his prayer. There was other work to do. He gave directions to his servant to be passed on to Ahab. Quickly the king was to be on his way. Elijah did not wait for the heavens to gather blackness; he acted on the first indication that his prayer had been heard. The world today needs men with the faith of Elijah. The work of God will be finished by men who work in the spirit and power of this prophet of old. To them heaven will be very near as they go forth in faith to battle against the hosts of evil. Multitudes will turn from a worship of the gods of this world to the Lord who made heaven and earth. Upon humble men and women everywhere the Spirit of God will fall (Joel 2:28, 29), enabling them to do in their sphere what Elijah did in his.

God's hand is not shortened that it cannot save. God is as powerful, as willing, to grant victories today as He was in the days of Elijah. When God's people come to the place where they have the same spirit as Elijah had, when they are as earnest, as active, as courageous, as willing to persevere in prayer, as dauntless in the face of danger, and as eager to answer the calls of the Lord, then God's work will quickly be finished and Jesus will return to receive His own.

45. *Jezreel.* This is the first mention of Jezreel as a royal city. Ahab had a palace here, although Samaria continued to be his capital (ch. 21:1). It was to the palace in Jezreel that Ahab desired to add the vineyard of "Naboth the Jezreelite," and in the securing of which Jezebel had Naboth slain (ch. 21:1–16). It was also here that the dogs were to eat the body of Jezebel (1 Kings 2:19, 23; 2 Kings 9:10, 33–37), and that Joram was slain by Jehu (2 Kings 9:15–26). Jezreel was in the territory of Issachar (Joshua 19:17, 18), in a

picturesque location overlooking the plain of Esdraelon. It was probably 28 mi. (45 km.) from Mt. Carmel to Jezreel.

46. *Ran before Ahab.* The return of Ahab to Jezreel was at night, in a blinding rainstorm, over treacherous mountain roads. The way being difficult to see, the desert prophet ran before the king, guiding the royal chariot in safety to the gates of Jezreel. In this gracious act Elijah showed that he had no ill feelings toward the king, and that he was willing to perform any service, however humble or inconvenient, for the benefit of his lord.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–46PK 133–159; 3T 274–288

1 3T 277

1, 2 PK 137

2 3T 274

4 PK 126

6–14PK 138

8 3T 277

10 3T 276

11 3T 277

13 3T 276

14 3T 277

15–17PK 139

17 DA 587; GC 104; 3T 276, 278

17, 18 GC 590

18 PK 140; 3T 278

18–21PK 177

19 PK 116, 143

21 CH 562; MM 96; PK 147, 188; TM 141; 3T 280; 4T 338, 350, 446; 5T 137, 173, 199, 526; 6T 141; 7T 155; 8T 68

22 Ed 151; 3T 274

22–24PK 148

22–263T 281

24 DA 215

25, 26 PK 149

26 3T 282, 283

26, 28 IT 231

27–29PK 150; 3T 282

30–32PK 151

30–393T 283

33–37PK 152

36 GW 255; 6T 99

36–40Ed 151; PK 224; 3T 285

37, 38 5T 161

38, 39 PK 153

39, 40 Ed 60

40 PK 154

41 PK 155

41–443T 286

42–44PK 156

45, 46 PK 158; 3T 287

CHAPTER 19

1 Elijah, threatened by Jezebel, fleeth to Beersheba. 4 In the wilderness, being weary of his life, he is comforted by an angel. 9 At Horeb God appeareth unto him, sending him to anoint Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha. 19 Elisha, taking leave of his friends, followeth Elijah.

1. Told Jezebel. It was a wonderful tale of what Elijah had done through the might and power of God. But it had no effect in touching Jezebel's heart and bringing about a desire to mend her evil ways. A hearing of truth simply hardens where it does not save.

2. Thy life. Here was a man of God who had done a valiant service for his master, and now he was threatened with death for his noble efforts. It is not in this world that the righteous receive their just awards for service performed in the name of the Lord. One of the apparent tragedies of life is that those who do the most in the cause of righteousness are those who also suffer the most. The reason may not always be understood. But there is comfort in the thought that Jesus, the sinless One, suffered more than any child of humanity will be called upon to suffer. The servant is not greater than his lord.

3. Went for his life. After so complete a triumph over the prophets of Baal, and after so great a display of courage, it would seem that God's prophet would be ready to meet any trial of faith. One might assume that Elijah, having had so marked an evidence of the presence and blessing of God, would never let his courage fail. But he was suffering from the reaction that so frequently follows marked success. He had hoped that the glorious victory on Carmel would break the spell of Jezebel upon the king. When the prophet was informed of the queen's stubborn resistance to the new appeal for reformation, it was more than he could bear. He was unprepared for the cool, calculated, determined hatred of this wicked queen. He could think only of how to escape the clutches of so embittered and relentless a foe. Without thinking of the consequences of his course he fled for his life.

Elijah did not do right in forsaking his post of duty. His work was not yet over. The battle had only begun. Had he stayed courageously by, and had he sent back a message to the queen reminding her that the God who had given him victory over the prophets of Baal would not forsake him now, he would have found angels ready to protect his life. God's judgments in signal fashion would have fallen upon Jezebel, a tremendous impression would have been made, and a mighty reformation would have swept over the land (see PK 160). By fleeing for his life Elijah played into the hands of the enemy. The flight to Beersheba went far toward nullifying the victory on Carmel.

Beer-sheba. The city was on the southern frontier of Judah, about 95 mi. (152 km.) from Jezreel. It belonged to the southern kingdom of Judah, which was at this time so closely associated with Israel that Elijah would not have been safe there.

4. A day's journey. Elijah did not stop in Judah. His fear drove him on. Not until he had gone a day's journey into the wild country of the south did he stop for rest. It seems that up to this point Elijah kept going by night as well as day, finding his strength in the fear that had so completely overwhelmed him. When he did sit down under a juniper tree he was completely exhausted.

He might die. The prophet's depression here reaches its lowest point. At the hour of victory on Mt. Carmel he had been exalted to the skies. Now, as he recalls the experience

of only a few days before, his spirits sink to their lowest ebb. He wishes himself dead. His suffering is a reaction of overstrained feeling; it is the kind of experience that sometimes follows the lifting of a soul to heights of glory and victory; the aftermath of a great religious revival, when the soul gives way to the discouragements and depressions induced by the trials of everyday life. It is well to remember that no one in this world can abide forever on the mountaintop. The path of life at times descends into the valley, where hardships and disappointments are the unavoidable facts of life. It is easy to be happy and courageous when we are at the very top of the world, but it is not nearly so easy when spirits are low and all the world seems determined to bring one down. It is then that man needs most to keep his hold on God, that he may not give way to doubt and despair. When down, look up, and climb to the heights again.

5. *Touched him.* As Elijah slept, a hand touched his side and a pleasant voice greeted him. It was an angel sent from God with a message of life and hope. First of all there was food to supply the wants of his body and to assist in restoring courage to his soul. It is wonderful what food can do to revive man's drooping spirits and bring back strength and courage that have fled. There was divine wisdom in God's simple treatment of the weary and exhausted prophet.

7. *The second time.* At the moment Elijah's need was for food and rest, and God again graciously provided these for him. It was an angel from God who prepared his meal.

Too great. The journey back would have been shorter than the journey ahead. But God did not remonstrate with the prophet, nor did He order him to retrace his steps. This journey was of Elijah's, not the Lord's, devising, yet angels of God did not forsake the prophet but rather assisted him on his way. The provision of food served to encourage him and supplied him with strength for the difficult days ahead. Although Elijah had made a mistake, the Lord did not cast him off, but sought to restore his confidence so that he would again be able to carry on his valiant work for God.

8. *Unto Horeb.* His journey took him through the wilderness where Israel had spent 40 years. The journey across the barren wastes was not long, but it was hard. Only about 200 mi. (328 km.) were involved, but he did not need to hurry. He was now safe from pursuit, and could take time to think things through as he made his leisurely way to the mount of God. On the same rugged hills where Moses had held communion with his Lord, there Elijah was to hold special communion with God.

9. *Unto a cave.* It was from a "clift of the rock" on Sinai that Moses had been given a view of God (Ex. 33:22), and it may have been the same cave where Elijah now took up his lonely abode.

What doest thou here? The question must have cut Elijah to the quick. But it was precisely the question that he needed to consider. Why, after all, was he there? Who had called him there? Was it duty? What was there now to do? Why was he not in Israel, instructing and encouraging those who had so recently turned their backs on Baal? There was great need for his ministry at home, but now Elijah found himself alone in a foreign land. However, this was no time for remorse, but rather for earnest searching of heart. Not until Elijah had regained control of himself, until he had learned to take courage in God and to undertake Heaven's tasks in Heaven's ways, would he be ready to return to his homeland to carry on the work from which he had run away. There were many

lessons for him to learn. The cave would be his schoolroom, and the Lord, his teacher (see PK 168).

10. *Very jealous.* Elijah could not get over the fact that he had been very earnest in his work for the Lord, and yet people were seeking to take his life. This world is the enemy's land, and many men and women are in the enemy's service. God's children must realize that in the great controversy Satan's way must not be entirely hedged, lest the warfare be unfairly waged, and Satan be able to say that he was not given a fair opportunity. To be irritated and ill at ease because things are not according to his liking is hardly the wise attitude for a saint or the proper attitude for a prophet.

11. *The Lord passed by.* What Elijah needed most was a new vision of God's strength and of his own weakness. It was at Sinai that the Lord had passed by before Moses, and revealed Himself as "the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth" (Ex. 34:6). Here too Elijah was to receive a new conception of God.

12. *Strong wind.* As Elijah stepped out of the cave a storm swept across the mountain and an earthquake shook the ground. All seemed to be in commotion, with the heavens on fire and the earth convulsed by forces that seemed about to rend it asunder. All this was in tune with the convulsive spirit of the prophet. What he needed to learn was that, mighty and moving though these forces be, they do not of themselves portray a true picture of the Spirit of God. It is not always the man who creates the greatest commotion who accomplishes the most for God.

13. *Still small voice.* After the wind and earthquake and fire came silence, and the still small voice of God. Here at length was the Lord as He chose to reveal Himself to His servant.

14. *Wrapped his face.* Elijah instinctively covered his face before the presence of God. His ruffled spirit was calmed, his impatience subdued. The high-strung, impetuous prophet became meek and submissive, ready to listen to the voice of the Lord. "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (Isa. 30:15). Not by bringing down fire from heaven, not by putting to death the prophets of Baal, but by a quiet work in which the Spirit of God would soften and subdue the hardened hearts of sinners, would Elijah see his greatest results secured in service for God, but by the quiet working of the Holy Spirit.

15. *Very jealous.* The answer is in the same words as before, but with a different spirit. The prophet is now calm and subdued. He is stating the facts, but he no longer holds the same attitude toward them. Men may seek his life, but he is willing now to go on with his work for God. It was a new Elijah who would go forth, not as fire or storm to produce great convulsions to be witnessed by multitudes of men, but in a more quiet manner, speaking to individuals here and there, to produce lasting results in the hearts and lives of men.

16. *Go, return.* These words teach that the withdrawal of Elijah from his work was wrong, that his mission was not yet over, and that God still had a work for him to do.

Anoint. See on v. 16.

Hazeael. See on 1 Kings 8:7, 8.

17. *Son of Nimshi.* Jehu was really the grandson of Nimshi, being the son of Jehoshaphat, who was the son of Nimshi (2 Kings 9:2, 14). But he is commonly known

as the son of Nimshi (2 Kings 9:20; 2 Chron. 22:7). The Hebrew word for “son” may be used to designate grandsons or even more distant descendants.

Elisha the son of Shaphat. There is no record that prophets were ever anointed in the literal sense of the term, though such may have been the case here. Certain priests (Ex. 40:15; Num. 3:3) and kings (1 Sam. 9:16; 10:1; 16:3, 13; 2 Kings 9:3, 6; Ps. 89:20) were anointed when first set apart for their specific missions. Inanimate objects were also at times anointed, such as articles associated with the sanctuary (Ex. 29:36; 30:26; 40:9; Lev. 8:10, 11; Num. 7:1), and even stones (Gen. 28:18). Some suggest that the word “anoint” should here be understood in a wider significance, meaning simply to set apart some individual or thing for the accomplishment of some service for God without involving an actual outward and formal anointing (see Judges 9:8). All three, Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha, were to serve for the execution of God’s will and purpose, yet each in a different way. By Hazael, the king of Syria, Israel was continually hard pressed from without (2 Kings 8:12, 29; 10:32; 13:3, 7), this heathen king being employed by the Lord as His instrument for the meting out of punishment (PK 254, 255; cf. Isa. 10:5). By Jehu the kingdom of Israel was shaken within. He was the tool in the hands of the Lord for putting an end to the house of Ahab and the worship of Baal (2 Kings 9:24, 33; 10:1–28).

17. The sword of Hazael. A work of judgment was to be wrought on Israel, and Hazael and Jehu were the instruments chosen to perform this work.

Shall Elisha slay. Elisha’s work was certainly not in the same category with that of Hazael and Jehu. There is no record that Elisha ever used the sword literally to slay anyone. Perhaps Elisha’s work of slaying was to be done in a figurative sense: “I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth” (Hosea 6:5); or in the sense in which Jeremiah’s work was described: “See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down” (Jer. 1:10). It is with the Word of God, which is “quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword” (Heb. 4:12), that prophets do their work of smiting and slaying. Elisha’s mission was one not of physical war but spiritual (2 Cor. 10:3–6); sin was the enemy, and it was wickedness that was to be rooted out of the land, not men.

18. Seven thousand. It does not pay even for a prophet of God to endeavor to number the faithful in Israel. Elijah had twice expressed himself to the effect that he alone was left of the devout in Israel (vs. 10, 14).

Kissed him. Idolaters frequently kissed the hand as a part of their worship (Job 31:26, 27), or the object itself (Hosea 13:2). Idols in heathen temples are still kissed.

19. Plowing. Elisha belonged to a family of some means, as may be indicated by the 12 teams of oxen. We must not assume that the 12 yoke of oxen were all hitched to one plow. Elisha had servants in the field with him, each with his plow, and the oxen were probably distributed to provide one pair for each plow (see PK 218). Elisha was called directly from the plow to prophetic ministry for God.

Mantle. The mantle, made of camel’s hair, was the characteristic robe of the prophets (see Mark 1:6; DA 102). The casting of Elijah’s mantle on Elisha constituted his call.

20. Left the oxen. Elisha’s response was immediate. Though he had followed the oxen and tilled the soil, God saw in him qualifications that would make him a powerful preacher in the cause of righteousness.

Kiss my father. Elisha, recognizing the significance of his call, asked only that before his departure he be allowed to kiss his loved ones farewell.

Go back again. Elisha was being tested, not repulsed. Would he go with Elijah, or would he choose to remain at home? He was making the greatest choice of his life.

21. A yoke of oxen. Elisha took the pair of oxen with which he had been plowing, slew them, and boiled their flesh on a fire kindled with the plow and yoke, thus signifying that he would never need them again. He was turning his back on the past, and entering the service of God.

Ministered unto him. The older prophet was in need of a younger companion and helper. The two were henceforth as one in their work for the Lord. The association reminds us of that of Moses and Joshua, and of Paul and Silas. The two men had different personalities, and the younger, calmer man would be of great help to his older more impetuous associate.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–21PK 159–176, 217–220; 1–14 3T 288–292

1 3T 288

1–43T 261

2 PK 159; 3T 289

3 EW 162

3, 4 PK 162

3–93T 289

4 DA 301; Ed 151; PK 160, 228; 3T 290

5–8PK 166

5–93T 291

9 PK 172

9–13PK 168

10–143T 291

11, 12 DA 217; MH 36

13–17PK 169

14 K 189

15 PK 254; 5T 77

16 Ed 151; PK 217

17 PK 254

18 Ev 559; PK 170, 188, 189, 225, 259; 5T 81; 7T 38; 9T 110, 142

19 GW 333; MH 148; PK 218, 219

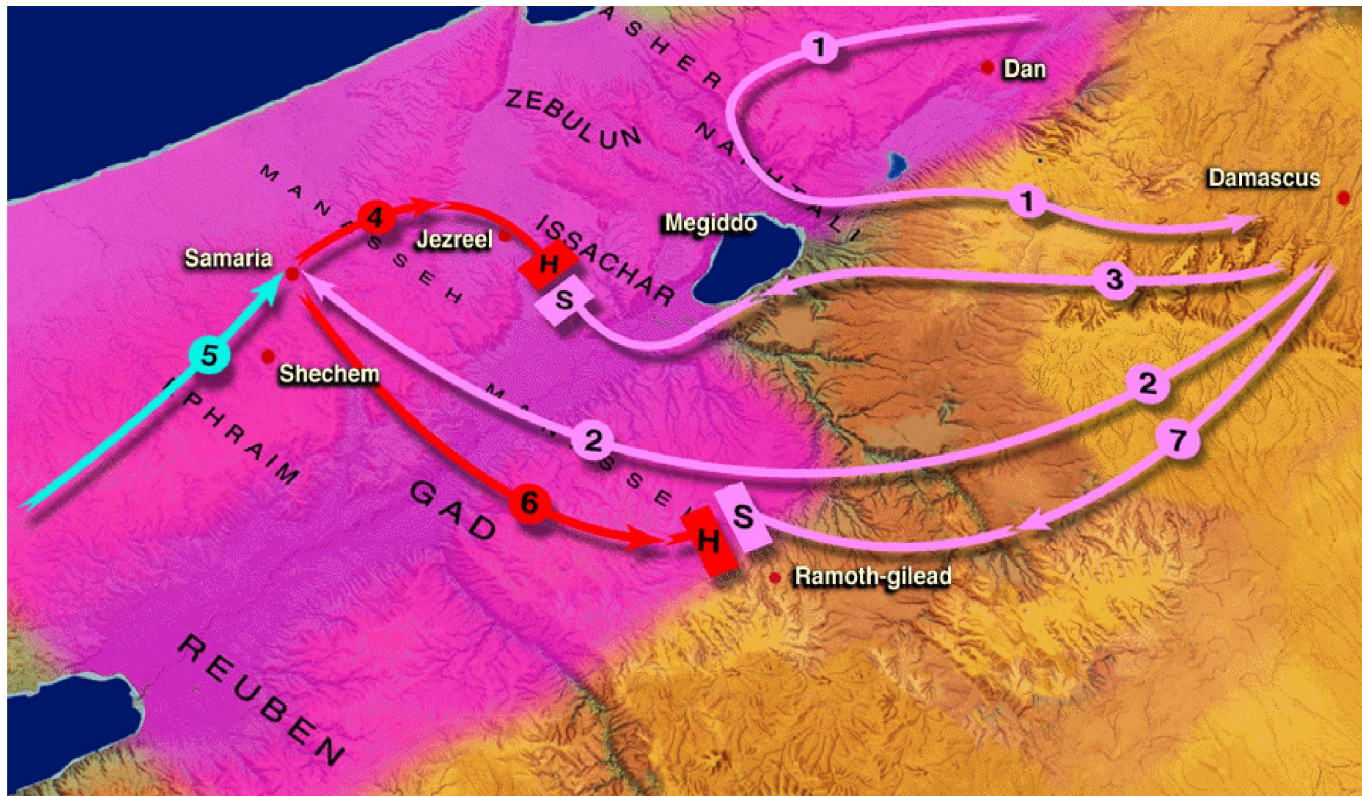
19–21Ed 58; 5T 82

20, 21 PK 220

CHAPTER 20

1 *Ben-hadad, not content with Ahab's homage, besiegeth Samaria.* 13 *By the direction of a prophet, the Syrians are slain.* 22 *As the prophet forewarned Ahab, the Syrians, trusting in the valleys, come against him in Apheck.* 28 *By the word of the prophet, and God's judgment, the Syrians are smitten again.* 31 *The Syrians submitting themselves, Ahab sendeth Ben-hadad away with a covenant.* 35 *The prophet, under the parable of a prisoner, making Ahab to judge himself, denounceth God's judgment against him.*

Israel's Wars With Syria in the Days of Baasha and Ahab



1. Ben-hadad. This chapter is quite different in contents and spirit from most of the material in Kings. It gives an interesting and valuable picture of the political life of the times. Benhadad had grown to be a powerful king and now occupied the dominant position among the rulers of western Asia, as is evidenced by the fact that the Assyrian records list him first among the western allies who fought against Shalmaneser III at Qarqar (see on v. 34).

Thirty and two kings. These were the heads of small Syrian city-states that recognized the suzerainty of Damascus.

Horses, and chariots. The number is not given, but at the battle of Qarqar, Benhadad is reported to have had 1,200 chariots, 1,200 cavalymen, and 20,000 infantry, as compared with 2,000 chariots and 10,000 infantry for Ahab.

3. Thy gold is mine. Historical items recorded in the Bible are often given in great brevity. We therefore do not know what the situation was that led to Benhadad's demand. It may be the sequel to some military advantage gained by the Syrian king over Ahab, or, more likely, it may simply mean a demand on the part of Benhadad for Ahab to recognize him as his lord, with Israel henceforth a vassal state to Syria.

⁵Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (1 Ki 17:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

4. *I am thine.* Ahab answered in conciliatory but humiliating terms. He was afraid. Either he had been outmaneuvered by Benhadad in some previous test of strength, or he did not have the courage to run the risk of war.

6. *Search thine house.* Such a demand was only adding insult to injury. Ahab had already been reduced to the humiliation of acknowledging that his silver and gold, and even his family, were the property of the Syrian king, but the present demand called for an immediate search of the palace and homes of Samaria, with the surrender of anything belonging to any of the people that might appeal to the plunderers. That meant unqualified and abject surrender.

7. *Seeketh mischief.* It seems evident that Benhadad was seeking for some excuse to pillage the city.

9. *Tell my lord.* Ahab's refusal is phrased in as gentle terms as possible. He continues his acknowledgment of suzerainty, agreed upon at his first submission, and is willing to recognize himself to be the "servant" or slave of the Syrian king. He expresses his willingness to comply with the demands already accepted, but the latter demands he "may not" accept. By such a conciliatory reply Ahab hoped to induce Benhadad to adopt a more reasonable attitude.

10. *The dust of Samaria.* The words of Benhadad involve a threat of utter destruction and a boast of irresistible strength. The expression seems to mean that so numerous are the people who follow the Syrian king, there is insufficient dust in Samaria to fill the hands of the soldiers.

11. *Let not him.* Ahab's courageous answer, expressed in four Hebrew words, has the flavor of a proverb.

12. *Was drinking.* Benhadad received the message while he was at a feast drinking. Orders were given to his subordinates in a single word, *šimu*, which means "set," or "form." Perhaps the Syrian king was too indignant and astonished for more words. He was acting out his utter contempt for the insignificant Hebrew king, and under the influence of drink he had become foolishly reckless. It was a case of "senses gone, courage strong."

13. *A prophet.* The situation in Israel had probably changed considerably since the great day at Carmel. Men of the prophetic order may again have been permitted to be about the land.

I will deliver. Without directions from the prophet, Ahab might not have had the courage to attack. It would mean much to Ahab, much to the elders and the nation, to have the present inglorious humiliation changed into a glorious victory.

14. *Who shall order?* Ahab must have had a considerable degree of confidence in God and in His prophets to ask the questions he did. The fate of the nation was at stake, and a prophet acting as the spokesman for God was accepted by the king as the virtual commander in chief.

15. *The young men.* The prophet had given directions and the king obeyed. "Young men" is here probably used as a technical military term. These may have been select shock troops, well trained and well armed, under the command of provincial officers.

Seven thousand. This was probably the extent of Israel's standing military force. At Qarqar, Ahab is reported to have had 10,000 infantrymen.

16. *At noon.* The sally was made at noon, when at the heat of the day the attackers were probably resting unarmed, with no expectation of being attacked.

Drinking himself drunk. Benhadad at this time was probably well under the influence of liquor, unable to evaluate the situation or to make wise decisions.

17. There are men. Since the sortie was made at noon, the approach was detected and there was not complete surprise. Word was sent to the king that a group of Hebrews was seen approaching.

18. Take them alive. In his haughtiness Benhadad ordered all the Hebrews to be seized, whether they had come out to negotiate terms of peace, whether they were offering to surrender, or whatever their purpose might be.

20. They slew. They fought man to man and hand to hand. An alert group of archers or spearmen might have been able to keep the little band of Hebrews at bay, but the Syrians did not awake to the situation till it was too late. Panic seized the host, and they turned and fled.

21. Smote the horses. Ahab was himself particularly well equipped with chariots. He set upon the Syrian horses and chariots, which probably were unprepared for the Hebrew attack. The result was a complete rout for the Syrian hosts.

22. Return of the year. Israel's regnal year seems to have begun in the spring, with the month Nisan (see p. 138). This is the season when military campaigns were set on foot in Mesopotamia and Palestine, and is called "the time when kings go forth to battle" (2 Sam. 11:1). Ahab was advised by the Lord to expect another attack from Syria the following year, after the rainy season of the winter was over.

23. Of the hills. Even the Syrians attributed the Hebrew victory to divine aid. But they had no true understanding of the omnipotence of Jehovah. Ancient polytheism was based on the idea of the local power and influence of deities. There was, for instance, a Baal of Hermon, a Baal of Lebanon, a Baal of the summit of Zaphon, and a Baal-shamin, who was the god of the heavens, of the mountaintops, and of lightning and thunder.

These Baalim are often mentioned in ancient religious texts as gods of war, as well as gods of the mountains, the clouds, and thunder. It may be that the Syrians were thinking primarily in terms of Baal, so prominent in Israel since the days of Jezebel, as the god who had given Ahab victory. Samaria lay in the mountainous region of Ephraim. If victory was to be secured for Syria, it was felt that the Israelites must be lured away from the hills into the valley, giving the Syrians both tactical and religious advantage.

24. Take the kings away. The counsel to remove the kings was probably due to the fact that as vassals these kings accompanied the king only through compulsion, and therefore were not so efficient or dependable in battle as would be leaders appointed by Benhadad himself.

25. Thou hast lost. The Syrian losses must have been unusually severe, requiring a replacement of practically the entire army. War places a low estimate upon human life or treasure.

26. Return of the year. That is, at the beginning of the next new year in the spring, the usual time for military campaigns in Palestine (see on v. 22).

Numbered the Syrians. Rather, mustered the Syrians for battle.

Aphek. Several Biblical places bore this name (see on 1 Sam. 4:1). The city referred to here was probably the one 3 3/4 mi. (6 km.) east of the Sea of Galilee, on the highway between Beth-shan and Damascus. Whichever city is meant it was probably the Aphek where Joash of Israel was later, according to Elisha's prophecy, to smite the Syrians till they were consumed (2 Kings 13:14–19).

27. *Were all present.* The marginal reading, “were victualled,” or the translation “were provided for,” or “furnished with provisions” is preferred. Israel had been mustered and fully supplied, or provisioned, with all things necessary for war. There had been time and opportunity to do this, since the struggle had been foretold (v. 22).

Flocks. Heb. *chašiph*, occurring only here in Scripture. It seems to indicate something separated, like two little flocks of goats that have been separated from the main herd.

28. *Ye shall know.* God did not intend that either Ahab or the Syrians should ascribe the coming victory to any other cause than His own intervention in Israel’s behalf. By His granting victory to His people, the heathen should know that the Lord only was God (see 2 Kings 19:16–34). God planned that the majesty of His name should be vindicated before all the peoples of earth (see Ps. 67:2; 102:15; 138:4; Eze. 20:9). By granting Israel victory over the great host of Syrians, Jehovah would show in the eyes of the nations around that He was a God not only of the hills but also of the valleys, and indeed of all the earth.

29. *Hundred thousand footmen.* The loss for Syria this time seems to have been largely among the infantry, whereas the previous season it was “the horses and chariots” (v. 21) that were especially mentioned as having been smitten.

30. *A wall fell.* The city was probably small, with a large number of Syrians crowded within the walls. The general pandemonium that ensued could easily have resulted in the death of a large number of men.

Into an inner chamber. Literally, into a “chamber within a chamber.” Benhadad’s refuge was probably within the citadel of the city, and especially strong place usually found in walled Oriental cities that could be used as a place of last retreat.

31. *Merciful kings.* It was a good report that had gone out among the nations around that the kings of Israel were merciful kings. If all rulers would only rule with mercy and compassion, if kindness took the place of cruelty, and justice and brotherly love the place of oppression and wrong, what a different world this would be.

32. *Thy servant Ben-hadad.* Only a short time before it was Ahab who had been the servant and Benhadad the lord (v. 20). Boastful Benhadad was no longer boasting, and had good reason to ponder Ahab’s message of the season before, “Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off” (v. 11).

Diligently observe. What would Ahab’s answer be? Would it mean life or death? The men were watching for any sign that might indicate Ahab’s reaction. In his addressing Benhadad as “brother,” they had their answer. The suspense was over and the danger past. The victor had committed himself. It would be clemency and friendship, rather than no quarter and death. Ahab’s extraordinary attempt at courtesy is displayed by receiving Benhadad into his own chariot.

34. *I will restore.* This refers to the cities which “Ben-hadad, the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion,” took from Baasha at the instigation of Asa (ch. 15:18–22). The fact that the present Benhadad refers to some previous king who took these cities from Israel as “my father,” proves conclusively that that king and the present Ben-hadad could not have been one and the same individual, as is held by some today. It was Benhadad I who was a contemporary of Baasha, and Benhadad II who was the contemporary of Ahab.

Streets. These are thought to be bazaars for purposes of trade, with the possessor having extraterritorial privileges. It is interesting to note that Syria had been in possession of such privileges in Samaria.

36. Slay thee. The command to strike had been given by “the word of the Lord” (v. 35). The companion, who was probably a brother prophet, should have promptly obeyed despite the disagreeableness and repulsiveness of the task. The swift judgment upon him served to drive home the lesson that unquestioning obedience should be given to the word of the Lord.

38. Ashes. This should read “bandage,” or “covering.” The Hebrew words for “ashes” and “bandage” are from the same root, only the vowel pointings being different. The word for “ashes” is *’epher*, and for “bandage,” *’apher*. The bandage probably served a dual purpose, to cover the wound and to disguise the prophet so that he might not be recognized by Ahab.

Face. Literally, “eyes.”

39. He cried. The meaning of the parable is clear. The bandaged prophet represented Ahab, the man entrusted to him, Benhadad.

40. Busy. Not about his business, but paying attention to everything else except the one matter of supreme importance.

Thy judgment. The king pronounces the verdict, not realizing that he is passing sentence against himself. The judgment is like that of David against himself in the parable of the ewe lamb (2 Sam. 12:5–7) or in the story of the two brothers (2 Sam. 14:10, 11).

41. Took the ashes away. Rather, took the bandage, or covering, away (see on v. 38).

42. Thy life. God had delivered Ben-hadad into the hands of Ahab to be destroyed. Ahab failed to sense his responsibility or to take advantage of his opportunity. In the harsh demands made upon him by Benhadad only the year before (vs. 3–6), Ahab should have sensed the character of the man with whom he was dealing, and should have acted accordingly. Benhadad was not to be trusted. He was only playing for time. A few years later Ahab was to pay for his leniency with his life (ch. 22:31–36).

43. Heavy and displeased. Ahab refused to acknowledge the justice of his sentence. He became angry and sullen, and showed no trace of true repentance or godly sorrow. But he had pronounced this sentence against himself, and with a finality that offered no appeal. Ahab, in his anger, no doubt would have preferred to seize the prophet for this outspoken rebuke, but this he could not well do, in view of the fact that he himself had given the judgment. He returned home far from happy, displeased with the prophet rather than himself, finding fault with the ways of God rather than with his own mistakes. The unregenerate human heart ever seeks to justify its mistakes; a man’s ways are generally right in his own eyes.

The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah in Elijah’s Time

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⁶Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (1 Ki 20:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.



CHAPTER 21

1 Ahab being denied Naboth's vineyard is grieved. 5 Jezebel writing letters against Naboth, he is condemned of blasphemy. 15 Ahab taketh possession of the vineyard. 17 Elijah denounceth judgments against Ahab and Jezebel. 25 Wicked Ahab repenting, God deferreth the judgment.

1. A vineyard. The city of Jezreel was in the plain of Esdraelon, to the north of Mt. Gilboa. It was on the brow of a steep, rocky descent sloping down toward the north and east. Since the ancient vineyards seem to have been to the east of the city, Ahab's palace was probably on the same side (see on ch. 18:45), affording a splendid view all the way toward Jordan.

2. Ahab spake unto Naboth. This account reveals the covetous, petulant, selfish disposition of the king, and the cold, calculating cruelty of the queen.

3. The Lord forbid it. To Naboth it seemed wrong to part with his vineyard. The Levitical code provided that "the inheritance of the children of Israel" might not "remove from tribe to tribe," but that everyone should "keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe to tribe," but that everyone should "keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers" (Num. 36:7–9). If for any reason property was sold, specific regulations were set forth providing for its periodic return to the families of the original owners (Lev. 25:13–28). Naboth believed it to be against the spiritual purpose of the Levitical law for him to transfer his inheritance to the king.

4. Heavy and displeased. Ahab had earlier returned home "heavy and displeased" upon learning that his dealings with Ben-hadad were not according to the purpose of God

(ch. 20:43). Not being able to secure the vineyard on which he had set his heart, he again went home “heavy and displeased.” His attitude was like that of a spoiled, selfish child, interested in no one but himself. When he could not have his own way he became sullen and angry, refused to eat, and threw himself on his bed. His whole kingdom seemed to mean nothing to him as long as he did not possess the vineyard of Naboth.

7. *Dost thou now govern?* Jezebel’s words were full of bitterness and scorn. Does a man who is lord of the realm need to admit that he cannot secure a small parcel of ground? Is Ahab the king allowing himself to be thwarted by some insignificant subject of his? The item could be easily handled—she would take care of the matter herself and show him how such things are done.

8. *Letters.* To Ahab it evidently was a matter of no consequence as to how Jezebel secured the vineyard, so long as it was secured. He did not restrain her from writing letters in his name, stamped with his seal, and so became equally responsible with her for the dastardly deed.

9. *A fast.* This may have been to cover up the foul crime with a cloak of religious sanctity, and to imply that some secret sin had been committed which, if not atoned for, would draw down divine vengeance on the whole city. The way would thus be prepared for the false accusation and death of the victim.

Set Naboth. Not to be honored, but to be tried.

10. *Two men.* Two men, in harmony with judicial requirements (Num. 35:30; Deut. 17:6).

Sons of Belial. Sons of iniquity, worthlessness, and wickedness—vile scoundrels of whom anything evil could be expected (see Judges 19:22; 20:13; 1 Sam. 1:16; 2:12; 10:27; 25:17, 25; 30:22; 2 Sam. 16:7; 20:1; etc.). It was a sad commentary on Israel to know that among the professed people of God such men were to be found.

11. *As it was written.* The ready acquiescence of the rulers of the city in carrying out this foul plot is characteristic of the worst to be found in Oriental despotism. The word of the king was law. Even base murder would be carried out under the pretense of justice. This ready submission of the elders and nobles implied a deep moral degradation among the people.

13. *Stoned him.* It appears from 2 Kings 9:26 that not only Naboth but also his sons were stoned. When Achan was put to death his sons and daughters were stoned with him (Joshua 7:24, 25). With Naboth’s sons out of the way there would be no heirs to law claim to the vineyard. The crime thus became doubly heinous.

15. *Take possession.* Naboth was dead and his sons with him, and all his property now belonged to the royal domain. Heedless of consequences, Ahab immediately took over the property as his own.

17. *Came to Elijah.* Jezebel thought she had everything perfectly arranged, but she had not reckoned with God. The Lord in heaven saw all that was taking place. The terrible crime of Ahab could not be allowed to go unrebuked. Elijah was sent by God to deliver Heaven’s message. When the Lord has a work to do He finds those who are willing to go on errands for Him.

18. *Samaria.* Not the city but the district of Samaria, as in ch. 13:32.

19. *Hast thou killed?* In Elijah’s meeting with Ahab there are to be no polite preliminaries. The prophet comes right to the point, calling attention to the outrageous act of brigandage and murder to which the king of Israel had set his hand. Ahab is given no

chance at excuse of subterfuge—the awful crime is unmasked at once, and the king stands forth for what he really is, a shameless marauder and murderer, who slays without pity and then moves in on his victim's goods.

Lick thy blood. The sentence was eminently just. “for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7).

20. Hast thou found me? It was his own guilty conscience that forced these words from Ahab's lips. The man he least wanted to see had come upon him and caught him at the site of his evil deed. Elijah was not Ahab's enemy but his friend. Ahab's worst enemy was himself, and Elijah was trying to save him from himself. God's message, though condemnatory, was still mingled with mercy. Ahab was shown the terrible fruitage of the seed then being sown, but the opportunity for repentance was not withdrawn.

21. I will bring evil. See on ch. 16:12.

22. Like the house. In the destruction of the house of Jeroboam, Ahab had an object lesson that could not be gainsaid. That house was gone. It perished because of wickedness. Ahab was following the same course and would suffer the same fate.

23. The dogs. Dogs in the Orient are scavengers that will eat offal of any description, and if the body of Jezebel were simply cast out in the open, it would soon be consumed by the neighborhood dogs.

24. Him that dieth. The fate that was predicted for Jezebel was also predicted for her children.

25. None like unto Ahab. Verses 25 and 26 are a parenthesis, bringing out the reason for the terrible fate that met the house of Ahab.

Stirred up. Sin was a fire that flamed in the heart of Ahab, but Jezebel saw to it that that flame was continually stirred so that it burned at its greatest intensity. It was through the influence of Jezebel that Ahab was induced to adopt the worship of Baal (ch. 16:31), to permit the slaying of prophets of God (ch. 18:4), to allow Elijah to be driven into banishment (ch. 19:2), and finally to murder Naboth and seize his land (ch. 21:7, 15).

26. As did the Amorites. How utterly abominable were the practices connected with ancient idolatry is only now, through the results of archeological research, clearly understood. There was vice and immorality in its vilest forms, there was cruelty and bloodshed, and demon worship with disgusting and degrading rites. For all these things the Amorites and other peoples of Canaan were to be driven from the face of the earth. Yet Ahab had abandoned himself to the same abominable practices.

27. When Ahab heard. It was a terrible indictment that Elijah delivered concerning the course of the king, and the words sank like a dagger into the very depths of his heart. That heart was not entirely evil. It could be touched. Ahab now saw himself as he actually was, and he trembled with fear as he thought of his approaching doom.

Rent his clothes. Under the severe censure of Elijah, Ahab bowed himself to the dust and clothed himself in sackcloth. It was a strange thing for the proud, tyrannical king to put on the garments of a mourner and adopt the attitude of a suppliant.

29. Ahab humbleth himself. Ahab did not clothe himself in sackcloth merely that he might be seen of men, but seen by them he was, and also by God. Such a course could have had a great influence upon the people if the king had only turned to the Lord earlier in this reign. It might have brought a great revival that would have spread throughout the land. As it probably was, the repentance came too late, or it may have been largely prompted by fear. But, however, that might be, God saw the prickings of conscience,

however faint they were, and He did not turn a deaf ear to the king's remorse and grief. God noticed the sackcloth and fasting of Ahab as he later did the sackcloth and fasting of the king and people of Nineveh (Jonah 3:5–10).

In his days. Pronouncement of judgment by Heaven is often conditional. If may sincerely repents, God forgives, and the judgment may be averted (Jer. 18:7, 8; Jonah 3:4, 5, 10). Ahab had the satisfaction of knowing that the predicted doom would be at least temporarily postponed.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–29PK 204–207

1 PK 204

2–8PK 205

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17–21PK 206, 224

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25 PK 204

25, 26 PK 115

27–29PK 207

CHAPTER 22

1 Ahab, seduced by false prophets, according to the word of Micaiah, is slain at Ramoth-gilead. 37 The dogs lick up his blood, and Ahaziah succeedeth him. 41 Jehoshaphat's good reign. 45 His acts. 50 Jehoram succeedeth him. 51 Ahaziah's evil reign.

1. *Three years.* This chapter picks up the thread of military narrative that is broken by ch. 21. These were eventful years in the history of Western Asia. Assyria was growing ever more powerful, and becoming a definite threat to the countries of Palestine and Syria. It is generally held that this was the time when, under the spur of the Assyrian threat, Israel and Syria temporarily composed their differences and joined together in a coalition against Assyria. It was probably this alliance that granted Israel and Syria a three-year period of peace. We know that Ahab and Benhadad were friends, at least for a time, because both fought together against Shalmaneser III at the battle of Qarqar (see p. 59).

3. *Ramoth in Gilead is our's.* Benhadad had evidently not returned to Ahab all the cities of Israel held by him, in accord with the promise that he had made (ch. 20:34), and Ahab realized that if they were to be restored to Israel, they must be secured by force.

4. *I am as thou art.* Jehoshaphat was already in alliance with Ahab, this alliance having been formed by the marriage of Ahab's daughter Athaliah to Jehoshaphat's son and heir, Jehoram (2 Kings 8:18, 27). Since Ahaziah, the son of this union, was 22 years old at the time of his accession (2 Kings 8:26), the alliance must have been in existence for some time. The fact that the kings succeeding Jehoshaphat in Judah are Jehoram and Ahaziah (2 Kings 8:16, 25), and that Ahab's two sons who succeeded him on the throne were named Ahaziah and Joram (1 Kings 22:40; 2 Kings 1:17; 3:1), is a further indication of the friendship existing between the two royal houses at this time.

My horses. Judah as well as Israel seems to have had an army equipped with both cavalry and chariots. Jehoshaphat was a strong military leader, feared and respected by the nations about (2 Chron. 17:10–19).

5. Enquire. Jehoshaphat, with his characteristic piety (1 Kings 22:43; cf. 2 Chron. 17:3–9; 19:3–11; 20:5–32), suggested to Ahab that inquiry be made of the Lord before the expedition was undertaken, and that the inquiry be made that day.

6. The prophets. These were probably not prophets of Baal, inasmuch as it is not likely that Ahab would have insulted Jehoshaphat, who had distinctly asked for a prophet of the Lord (*Yahweh*), by summoning the avowed prophets of a heathen deity. They claimed to speak in the name of Jehovah, but they were false prophets.

The Lord shall deliver. The Hebrew word here used for “Lord” is *’adonai*, not *Yahweh*, and may apply to any god who is regarded as Lord or master, as well as the one true Lord, *Yahweh*, that is, Jehovah. If these had been prophets of Baal, they might be expected to use the term “Baal” instead of “Lord.” Later, however, these same prophets do use the term *Yahweh* for their god, as may be seen in the English translation, “Lord” (vs. 11, 12), appearing in capitals (see Vol. I, p. 35).

7. Of the Lord. The term here used by Jehoshaphat is *Yahweh*. The king of Judah is distinctly dissatisfied with the prophets of Israel, thus indicating that they must be placed in an entirely different category from the prophets of the true God and the only real “Lord,” Jehovah. From here on, however, the word *Yahweh* is used by both the true prophet of Jehovah and the others for the God they worship, as “Lord” (vs. 8, 11, 12, 14–17, 19, 21, 24).

8. Micaiah. There was one man, according to Ahab, of whom it was possible to inquire of *Yahweh*, but Ahab did not like him. This man was a true prophet of Jehovah. Josephus asserts that it was Micaiah (*Antiquities* viii. 14. 5) who had prophesied evil of Ahab for the king’s unwise conduct toward Benhadad (ch. 20:35–43).

I hate him. Evil usually hates the good. Micaiah was hated by Ahab because his words were not in line with the desires of Israel’s wicked king, who wanted his own way, and wanted prophets who would prophesy accordingly.

10. Entrance of the gate. Following a state banquet at which Jehoshaphat and his entourage were royally entertained (2 Chron. 18:2), the two kings proceed to an open square at the city gate. The gate of a city was a place of great importance. Often kings sat there to administer justice (2 Sam. 15:2; 19:8; cf. Ruth 4:1; Ps. 127:5).

11. Horns of iron. Probably one for Israel and another for Judah, to symbolize the powers by which Syria was to be smitten. Horns are frequently used in Scripture to represent victorious strength (Deut. 33:17; 1 Sam. 2:1) or nations or powers (Dan. 7:7, 8, 24; 8:2–10; Zech. 1:18, 19). Prophets often used symbolical acts as effective methods for illustrating their messages (Jer. 13:1–11; 19:1; 27:2; Eze. 4:1–4, 9, 12:3–7; 24:3–12, 15–24).

Thus saith the Lord. It is interesting to note that Zedekiah now presumed to speak in the name of Jehovah. This would not indicate that he was a true prophet of Jehovah, but he was probably simply dissimulating to comply with Jehoshaphat’s demand (v. 5).

12. All the prophets. The prophets of Israel were giving the message that the king of Israel wanted to hear. They knew it not, but such a course would mean his death. They were actually encouraging him to go on this foolish and disastrous mission.

The Lord. Heb. *Yahweh*. The prophets were now using the name of Jehovah, a title they at first had avoided (see on v. 6). They were false prophets, and they were not speaking for Jehovah, even though they now ventured to employ His name in their deceptive declarations.

13. Declare good. Prophets of God receive their messages from God, not from men. It is the Lord who directs them and tells them what to say, whether that be in accord with the voices of others or not. The messenger who was dispatched to fetch Micaiah had a low idea of prophets in general when he thought that by such counsel as he was offering he could influence the message delivered.

That which is good. The good is not always that which appears to be good, or that which men may desire to hear. To encourage Ahab to go on this disastrous mission that would bring death to the king was not good from Ahab's own point of view. Far better is unpalatable truth than welcome untruth.

14. What the Lord saith. True prophets cannot be bribed or forced to prophesy smooth things. "Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21).

15. Go, and prosper. Micaiah appears, in dramatic irony, to take up and mock the utterance of the false prophets. "Yes, 'go, and prosper'—that is what the prophets have been saying to you—and 'the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.' Just try it and see what will happen" One can hear the contempt and scorn in Micaiah's voice as he gives again the message the king had heard from "all the prophets," the one message that he wanted to hear.

16. That which is true. Ahab seems to have sensed at once that the prophet spoke in irony. Ahab was well enough acquainted with God, and with men who falsely claimed to speak in His name, to know that Micaiah did not intend his words to be taken as true.

17. Israel scattered. Micaiah now changes his tone and becomes profoundly serious. He delivers the message that was given him by God. Israel would be scattered upon the hills, and would return to their homes without their king.

18. Did I not tell thee? Yes, he had (v. 8), and now again Micaiah's message was one of evil results to come to both king and people. When a course is evil, a true prophet can only describe it as evil. What was needed was not a change of message on the part of the prophet, but a change of course on the part of the king.

19. I saw the Lord. This was an amazing vision. The prophet was permitted to see the play and counterplay behind human affairs. It recalls the vivid picture in Job 1:6–12.

22. A lying spirit. In the Bible, God is frequently presented as doing that which He does not restrain. The whole picture is a parable. Ahab had chosen to be guided by false prophets, and God simply permitted him to be guided by these prophets to his ruin.

24. Smote Micaiah. The spirit of evil always reveals itself as evil. It is harsh, not kind; cruel, not merciful. God's people are admonished, "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God" (1 John 4:1). "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20). A listing of the works of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit is found in Gal. 5:19–23, and by these the nature of the spirits may be tested. By smiting Micaiah on the cheek, Zedekiah gave proof that the spirit within him was evil.

25. Thou shalt see. Micaiah addresses himself not so much to the exact words of Zedekiah's question as to the main point in dispute, that is, which of them was a true

prophet. Zedekiah soon would see. In the reverses that would come from Ahab's defeat, Zedekiah himself would suffer.

27. In the prison. Ahab by his act of violence toward Micaiah reveals the wicked man that he is. He places in prison the prophet whose counsel, if heeded, would have saved his life.

In peace. Ahab wants Israel to think he does not believe the prophet and that he is certain that he will safely return. But his subsequent conduct (v. 30) shows that he probably had serious misgivings as to the outcome of the engagement to which he was committing himself.

28. Hearken, O people. Micaiah accepts the king's challenge, and he wants all the people to take notice. If Ahab returns in peace, then he will admit that the Lord has not spoken by him and that he is a false prophet. The opposite, of course, also holds true. If the king does not return in peace, then the whole nation may know that the 400 prophets who have spoken so loudly and boldly are nothing but deceivers and that the Lord is not with them. It is a fair test (Deut. 18:22).

29. Went up. It might have been expected that Jehoshaphat, who had asked for a prophet of the Lord (v. 5), would heed the prophet's message and refuse to go upon the expedition Micaiah had foretold would end in disaster. He had, it is true, rashly committed himself, by a solemn promise (v. 4), to take part in the war, and he was evidently bound to Ahab by a military alliance, yet he could have made it clear to Ahab that he could not go contrary to the will of the Lord. Indeed, by so doing he might have dissuaded Ahab from undertaking the war. By his willingness to accompany Ahab, Jehoshaphat was encouraging Ahab to court disaster. As it was, Jehoshaphat received a severe rebuke from the Lord for having joined in this enterprise (2 Chron. 19:2).

30. Disguise myself. The precaution of Ahab is characteristic of his temper of half belief and half unbelief. In his heart of hearts he knew Micaiah to be a true prophet, and he had a fear that his prophecy would be fulfilled. But he would do everything he could to avert the fulfillment of the prediction.

31. Fight. This order came from the man whose life Ahab had spared, and for which action Ahab had received the prophetic rebuke (ch. 20:42).

32. Jehoshaphat cried out. In 2 Chron. 18:31 are the additional words: "And the Lord helped him; and God moved them to depart from him." It was probably a spontaneous cry to God for help, and to his own forces for immediate assistance. The cry was recognized by the Syrians as not coming from the king of Israel.

34. At a venture. Life's greatest victories and its greatest defeats at times hang upon causes that seem small indeed. The Syrian bowman, drawing his bow at a venture, killed a king and won a battle. It is unlikely that the man who fired the arrow knew the result of his shot. Shots of venture are sometimes shots of destiny. But it is good to know that no arrow of fate can strike without the knowledge of Him who is overruling all.

Turn thine hand. The driver could turn the chariot, but he could not turn the hands on the clock of fate. Ahab's last hour had come, and he knew that the prophecy of Micaiah was true.

35. Stayed up. Ahab made a brave attempt to carry on, allowing himself to be supported in his chariot till the very end.

36. *Every man to his city.* The death of the king at even was the death of Israel's hopes for victory. Not only did Ahab by his stubbornness bring himself down to an inglorious grave; he brought tragedy and defeat to an entire nation.

37. *In Samaria.* From the time of Omri onward Samaria was the regular burial place for Israel's kings (1 Kings 16:28; 2 Kings 10:35; 13:9; 14:16).

38. *The pool of Samaria.* Archeological excavations have unearthed what is believed to be this pool. It was in a court at the northern wing of Ahab's palace, and measured 33.6 by 16 ft. (10.2 by 4.9 m.), with a depth of 16 ft. The pool was cut in the rock and cemented with a heavy coating of plaster.

Washed his armour. Literally, "the harlots washed." The LXX adds "in the blood." The meaning is obscure. Some practice, today unknown, may be referred to. Josephus' paraphrase of the passage is, "the harlots continued afterwards to wash themselves in that fountain" (*Antiquities* viii. 15. 6). The translation of the KJV reflects the Syriac and the Vulgate.

39. *The ivory house.* Compare the "ivory palaces" of Ps. 45:8 and the "houses of ivory" of Amos 3:15. Ahab's palace was so named because of its rich ornamentation with ivory. This description has been fully substantiated by archeological excavation of Ahab's palace, where furnishings with ivory inlay were found. Many examples of ivory carving have been found in Palestine and Syria (see p. 81).

The cities. No further record has been found of these cities. During the reign of Ahab there was great prosperity.

40. *Ahaziah.* It is true that Ahaziah reigned immediately after the death of Ahab, but the details of his reign do not appear till v. 51.

41. *Jehoshaphat.* After the comparatively lengthy account of Ahab's reign (1 Kings 16:29 to 22:41), the record now returns to a king of Judah (see p. 145).

43. *Ways of Asa.* Few specific details concerning the reign of Jehoshaphat are given in Kings, the entire record covering only vs. 41 to 50. In Chronicles the record is much more complete (2 Chron. 17:1 to 21:1). The main item stressed is that he was a good king, walking in the ways of his father Asa. On the general piety of Asa, see 1 Kings 15:11–15; 2 Chron. 14:2–5; 15:8–18. But Jehoshaphat seems to have been a better king than his father, for there is no account of his falling away in his old age as did Asa (2 Chron. 16:2–12).

Not taken away. This agrees with 2 Chron. 20:33. But 2 Chron. 17:6 states that "he took away the high places and groves out of Judah." The meaning probably is that Jehoshaphat removed the more vile places of worship such as contained "groves," but allowed certain unauthorized sanctuaries to remain. Or he may have removed them, and some were later restored.

44. *Made peace.* According to 2 Chron. 18:1, Jehoshaphat "joined affinity with Ahab." That is, he entered into a formal alliance with him. The alliance was sealed by the marriage of Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, to Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat (2 Kings 8:18, 26; 2 Chron. 21:6). Ahaziah, the son of this union, was presumably named after Ahab's son and heir, and Ahab's next son seems to have been named after Ahab's son-in-law, Jehoram, heir to the throne of Judah (see on v. 4). Under the alliance, which evidently was continued by the heirs of Jehoshaphat and Ahab, the members of the royal houses made visits to one another (1 Kings 22:2; 2 Kings 8:29; 2 Chron. 18:1, 2), made a

common disposition of their forces in battle (1 Kings 22:4; 2 Chron. 18:3; 22:5, 6), and united in joint ventures for foreign trade (2 Chron. 20:35, 36).

45. How he warred. For the wars of Jehoshaphat see 2 Kings 3:9–27; 2 Chron. 20:1–27; and for his “might,” see 2 Chron. 17:12–19; 18:1; 20:29, 30.

Book of the chronicles. See 1 Kings 14:29; 15:7, 23; 2 Kings 8:23; etc. In addition Jehu, the son of Hanani, wrote a biography of Jehoshaphat’s life (2 Chron. 20:34).

46. Sodomites. See on chs. 14:24; 15:12.

47. No king in Edom. There has been no reference to the condition of Edom since the time of Solomon, when Hadad, having returned thither from Egypt was “an adversary unto Solomon” (ch. 11:14). It appears, however, that Edom had again been reduced to dependency, perhaps by Asa or Jehoshaphat, and was ruled by a deputy or viceroy, who, however, was allowed no royal title (see 2 Kings 3:9, 12, 26).

48. At Ezion-geber. Ezion-geber was Solomon’s seaport (1 Kings 9:26; 2 Chron. 8:17), in Edomite territory, now ruled by a subject king. A fuller account in 2 Chron. 20:35–37 makes it clear that Ahaziah of Israel was at first joined to Jehoshaphat in this enterprise, but that the alliance was denounced by the prophet Eliezer, with the result that the Lord wrecked the ships at Ezion-geber, where they were built.

49. Would not. After the divine judgment on his fleet Jehoshaphat refused to renew the earlier compact with Ahaziah.

50. Jehoram his son. Jehoram began to reign with his father as coregent before Jehoshaphat’s death, as is seen by comparing the two statements in 2 Kings 1:17 and 3:1.

51. Two years. Two years, inclusive reckoning, one actual year.

53. Served Baal. In this short reign the influence of Ahaziah’s mother, Jezebel, again manifests itself. Here ends the first book of Kings. The remaining items of Ahaziah’s reign are recorded in the first chapter of 2 Kings.

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1–53PK 190–196, 207

8 PK 195

16, 17 PK 196

22 TM 409

29, 36 PK 196

43 PK 190

46 PK 191

50 PK 212

51–535T 191

52, 53 PK 207

⁷Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (1 Ki 21:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.